A HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE



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A HISTORY

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

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Dedicated to

MR. ORLANDO LEACH

PREFACE

This book is, in the main, an expansion of the text of the author's "Introduction to English Literature." The historical surveys and the biographical and critical sketches are more extended, and nearly twice as many authors are treated at length.

The large number of authors treated has prevented the use of illustrative extracts other than those given in the biographical and critical sketches. It is expected that the book will be supplemented by the reading or careful study of complete masterpieces, the selection of which is left to the judgment of the teacher.

This work traces the course of English literature in its organic development. It presents a survey of the whole field, and reveals to the student the position and relations of the great English writers. The use of separate, unrelated texts, without such a comprehensive survey, results in fragmentary and unsatisfactory knowledge.

Considerable attention has been given to the historical and social conditions that largely determine the character of literature. The influence of race, epoch, and surroundings has been clearly pointed out; and thus, not only the history, but also the philosophy, of English literature has been in a measure presented.

This work is intended to be, not a cyclopædia of English literature, but a practical text-book. In the judgment of thoughtful teachers this fact will justify the omission of many names which would serve only to confuse and burden the student's memory. It is believed that as many authors have been treated at length as can be profitably

studied in our schools and colleges. For the sake of greater completeness, a list of less important writers, together with their principal works, is prefixed to each period.

It is hoped that the comparatively full and sympathetic treatment of the great English authors will tend to awaken interest in literature, and give a clearer insight into its nature and beauty. Unusual prominence has been given to the writers of the nineteenth century.

As an aid to many teachers and students, a list of some of the best and most accessible books relating both to the general subject of English literature and to particular authors has been given in an appendix. Not a few references have been given, also, to magazine and review articles of special interest or value. As nearly all of these works have been used in the preparation of the present volume, the writer wishes to refer to them as his authorities.

It is hoped that the list of books appended as a general guide for reading will prove acceptable to a large number of students. It is designed to include only such books as have gained, by reason of some excellence or other, a noteworthy or permanent place in English literature. Many admirable books have been omitted; for, with so great an abundance of literary treasures, the effort has been, not to extend, but to shorten the list.

The author and publishers wish to express their great indebtedness to Mr. Frederick Keppel, of New York City, for the use of his large collection of authentic and finely executed portraits. It is believed that the literary map and the numerous illustrations will add much to the interest and usefulness of the book.

F. V. N. PAINTER.

SALEM, VA.,
December 26, 1899.

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HISTORY OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION.

Literature in its largest sense — National literature — English literature — Its excellence — Moulding influences — Race — Epoch — Environment — Personal elements — Literature in a narrower sense — Importance of literature — As a social force — Literary taste — Periods of English literature.

In its largest sense, literature includes all the written records of man. It presents the thoughts, emotions, and achievements of the human family. Its vast extent renders it absolutely impossible for any person to become acquainted with more than a very small part of it. The greatest libraries of the world now contain more than a million volumes, to which thousands are added every year.

This general or universal literature is made up of national literatures. A national literature is composed of the literary productions of a particular nation. After reaching a state of civilization, every nation accumulates a body of writings that express the thoughts, feelings, and achievements of its people. Thus we have the literature of Greece, of Rome, of Germany, of England, and of other nations, both ancient and modern.

English literature embraces the writings of the people of Great Britain. It covers a period of about twelve hundred years; and five hundred years ago it had in Chaucer one of the world's great writers. It shares in the greatness of the English people. It combines French vivacity with German depth; and in its scope, variety, and excellence it is second to no other. No department of literature has been left uncultivated. Poets have sung in sweet and lofty strains; novelists have portrayed every phase of society; orators have convinced the judgment and moved the heart; scientists have revealed the laws of the physical world; historians have eloquently told of the past; and philosophers have deeply pondered the mysteries of existence.

This literature is a heritage in which all English-speaking people may feel a just pride. It is a subject to which they should give careful study. It embodies the best thought and the noblest feeling of the English people; and an acquaintance with it leads not only to greater breadth of culture, but also to a profounder insight into English history and English character. Standing in close relation to us, it naturally possesses a deeper interest than the literature of any other country.

Literature is influenced or determined by whatever affects the thought and feeling of a people. Among the most potent influences that determine the character of a literature are *race*, *epoch*, and *surroundings*. This fact should be clearly understood, for it renders a philosophy of literature possible. We cannot fully understand any work of literature, nor justly estimate its excellence, without an acquaintance with the national traits of the writer,

the general character of the age in which he lived, and the physical and social conditions by which he was surrounded. The relation between literature and history is very intimate.

The human family is divided into several races, which are distinguished from one another by different physical and mental characteristics. The Caucasian is clearly distinguishable from the African, not only by his fairer skin and straighter hair, but also by his superior intellectual powers. Within the same race we discover similar, though less clearly marked, differences. Apart from noticeable physical differences, the Teuton, with his serious, reflective, persistent temper, is quite unlike the Celt, with his vivacity, wit, and ready enthusiasm. No two nations are exactly alike in form and in mind. These differences, wherever found, are naturally reflected in literature, which is the expression of the life of the soul.

Every age has its peculiar interests, culture, and tendencies. With the ancient Jewish nation, religion was a predominant interest. In the Elizabethan Age, culture was far more general than at the period of the Norman Conquest. The present century is characterized by its democratic tendencies. Whatever may be the epoch, its peculiarities will inevitably be reflected in its literary productions. An acquaintance with the general character of an age gives a deeper insight into its literature.

The third formative influence in literature is environment or the prevailing physical and social conditions. The literature produced in the presence of a sterile soil and rigorous climate is different in tone and color from that produced in the midst of fruitful fields and under sunny

skies; and, in like manner, its quantity and quality are affected, to a greater or less degree, by a state of war or peace, intelligence or ignorance, wealth or poverty, freedom or persecution.

But it is a mistake to suppose that race, epoch, and surroundings will explain everything in literature. There is a personal element of great importance. From time to time, men of great genius appear, and rising by native strength high above the level of their age, become centres of a new and mighty influence in literature. This truth is exemplified by Homer in Greece, Luther in Germany, and Chaucer in England, each of whom exerted an incalculable influence upon the subsequent literary development of his country.

The word *literature*, which up to this point has been used in its large, general sense, has also a restricted meaning, which it is important to understand, and with which we are principally concerned in this work. In any literary production we may distinguish between the *thoughts* that are presented, and the *manner* in which they are presented. We may say, for example, "The sun is rising;" or, ascending to a higher plane of thought and feeling, we may present the same fact in the language of Thomson: —

> "But yonder comes the powerful King of Day,
> Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
> The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
> Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
> Betoken glad."

It is thus apparent that the interest and value of literature are largely dependent upon the manner or form in

which the facts are presented. In its restricted sense, literature includes only those works which are polished or artistic in form. Poetry, fiction, essays, and oratory are its principal forms, though history and scientific treatises often reach an excellence that makes them literature in the narrower sense. The classic works of a literature are those which present ideas of general and permanent interest in a highly finished or artistic manner.

The importance of literature, both in its larger and its narrower sense, can hardly be over-estimated. Books are the treasure-houses, in which the intellectual riches of all past ages have been permanently stored. Literature is our principal means of acquiring a knowledge of the achievements of our race, and of rising to the highest plane of intellectual and spiritual culture. By means of literature we reach beyond the narrow limits of our own life and experience, and appropriate the best intellectual and spiritual results of all ages and all civilized peoples.

Literature is a great force in the world. "Books," as Milton said, "are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men." Many of the great religious, social, and political movements of the Christian era have stood in close relation to literature. The Christian church to-day owes its development and character chiefly to the writings of the New Testament. The great intellectual movement

of the fifteenth century, to which we give the name of Renaissance, was largely due to a revived study of the literary treasures of ancient Greece. The American and French revolutions at the close of the last century owed their origin and vitality, in no small degree, to the views of human rights previously promulgated in the writings of a few clear-sighted patriots and philosophers; and to-day the power of literature is so generally recognized that every party, sect, or organization deems it necessary to have its printed organ, and to promulgate its views through tracts and books.

It is not easy to acquire the literary taste that is satisfied only with what is excellent in thought and expression. Good taste in literature is a combination of adequate knowledge, delicate feeling, and sound judgment. It goes hand in hand with general culture. Natural gifts facilitate its acquirement, but in every case it is the result of extensive reading and careful study. The guiding hand of a competent teacher is at first almost indispensable. Our great writers, almost without exception, serve a long apprenticeship. As in the acquisition of language, it is necessary to begin with what is simple and easy. We rise to the mountain summits of thought and feeling, as to the summit of the Alps, by slow and laborious steps.

The history of English literature, following the development of the English language, may be divided into three general periods: —

1. The Old English or Anglo-Saxon Period, extending approximately from 500 to 1066 A.D., the date of the Norman Conquest. The literature of this period is written in

Old English or Anglo-Saxon, with very little admixture with other languages.

2. The Middle English or Formative Period, extending approximately from 1066 to 1400, the date of Chaucer's death. This period is characterized by the loss of Old English inflections, and by the introduction of a large French element through the Norman Conquest.

3. The Modern English Period, extending approximately from 1400 to the present time. It is characterized by the fixed forms of our expanded language, and by its varied and unsurpassed literature. It is subdivided, as will be hereafter noted, into several subordinate periods, according to the literary or social movements of the time.

OLD ENGLISH OR ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.

REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

Poetry.

Cædmon († 680).
Author of "Beowulf."

Prose.

Alcuin (735–804).
Bede (673–735).
Alfred the Great (849–901).

I.

OLD ENGLISH OR ANGLO-SAXON PERIOD.

(500–1066.)

English language composite — Original inhabitants of British Isles — Roman conquest — Anglo-Saxon invasion — Character of Anglo-Saxons — Their religion — Missionary work of Augustine — Influence of Christianity — Education — Alcuin — Bede — Anglo-Saxon language — Different dialects — Poetry and gleeman — Principle of Anglo-Saxon poetry — Its characteristics — Value of Anglo-Saxon literature — Cædmon, "Beowulf" — Other poems — Alfred the Great.

The English nation, like the English language, is composite. The principal element in both, coming chiefly from the Angles and Saxons, is Teutonic. Through the native population of the British Isles — Britons, Scotch, and Irish — there has gradually been introduced a Celtic element. The Danes, who in the ninth century established themselves in England and were afterward absorbed, strengthened the Teutonic element. Through the Norman Conquest, in the eleventh century, a further Celtic element was introduced. The infusion of this Celtic strain into the sturdier Teutonic stock has been peculiarly fortunate, imparting to the English character a greater delicacy of feeling and a finer poetic sensibility. The greatness of English literature is due, in no small measure, to this happy admixture of Teutonic and Celtic elements.

The original inhabitants of the British Isles, within historic times, were Celts — a part of the first great Aryan wave that swept over Europe. In a portion of Great Britain, — in Ireland, Scotland, and Wales, — the Celtic element is still very strong. The Celts are a vigorous people, adhering to their national customs with great tenacity. They possess a lively imagination, delicate feeling, and a ready enthusiasm. They seem, however, to be lacking in the power of strong political organization; and this defect made them a prey, first to Roman, and later to Teutonic, invaders.

The Romans under Cæsar invaded Britain, 55 B.C., and partly subdued it. In the following century Agricola extended the Roman conquest over the territory now included in England, and reduced Britain to a Roman province. Towns were built; military roads were constructed; Roman law was administered; Christianity was introduced; and a considerable commerce was developed. Corn was exported, and the tin mines of Cornwall were worked. But the native population, unlike what had taken place in Gaul and Spain, remained unassimilated to the empire, and still clung, in large measure, to its language and customs. When, after some four hundred years, the Roman forces were withdrawn, the Latin language, with the exception of a very few words, disappeared entirely. The principal relics of this Roman occupation surviving in our language to-day is the word *street* (from the Latin *strata via*, a paved way), and the words *caster*, *cester*, and *chester* (from the Latin *castra*, camp) in the names of places; as, Lancaster, Worcester, and Winchester.

After the withdrawal of the Roman legions in the fifth century, Britain was invaded by the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes — Teutonic tribes that inhabited Schleswig, Jutland, and adjacent territory on the Continent. The beginning of this invasion is usually dated from 449, the year in which Hengist and Horsa, according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, landed on the shores of Kent. The invading Teutons, hated for their cruelty and their heathenism, were stubbornly resisted by the native Celts, and it was nearly a hundred years before the Britons were finally driven back into Cornwall and Wales. They slowly retired, as did the American Indians in this country, without assimilation; and beyond a few names of places, they left scarcely any trace in our language. The Saxons occupied the south, and the Angles the north and centre of Britain; and to the latter, who were the more numerous, belongs the honor of giving to the country its modern name of England — a word signifying the land of the Angles.

In the character of these Teutonic tribes are to be found the fundamental traits of the English people and of English literature. In their continental home they led a semi-barbarous and pagan life. The sterile soil and dreary climate fostered a serious disposition, and developed great physical strength. Courage was esteemed a leading virtue, and cowardice was punished with drowning. No other men were ever braver. They welcomed the fierce excitement of danger; and in rude vessels they sailed from coast to coast on expeditions of piracy, war, and pillage. Laughing at storms and shipwrecks, these daring sea-kings sang: "The blast of the tempest aids our oars; the bellowing

of heaven, the howling of the thunder hurts us not; the hurricane is our servant, and drives us whither we wish to go."

With an unconquerable love of independence, they preferred death to slavery. Refined tastes and delicate instincts were crushed out by their inhospitable surroundings; and their pleasures, consisting chiefly of drinking, gambling, and athletic sports, were often coarse and repulsive. Yet under their coarsest enjoyment we discover a sturdy, masculine strength. They felt the presence of the mysterious forces of nature, and deified them in a colossal mythology. Traces of their religion are seen in the names of the days of the week. Wednesday is Woden's day, the god of war and the guardian of ways and boundaries; Thursday is Thor's day, the god of thunder and storm; Friday is Frea's day, the goddess of peace, joy, and fruitfulness. Eostre, the goddess of dawn and of spring, lends her name to the festival of the Resurrection. With these Teutons the sense of obligation and duty was strong; and having once pledged fidelity to a leader or cause, they remained loyal to death. They honored women and revered virtue. In a word, they possessed a native seriousness, virtue, and strength, which, ennobled by Christianity and refined by culture, raised their descendants to an eminent position among the nations of the earth.

The Anglo-Saxon invasion swept away the British church which had been established under Christian Rome. A reign of paganism was once more introduced, and held sway for a hundred and fifty years. Then occurred an event that changed the character of English history. In 597 Gregory, who filled the papal chair at Rome, sent St.

Augustine with a band of missionaries to labor among the Anglo-Saxons. While yet an abbot, Gregory's interest had been awakened by the fair faces and flaxen hair of a group of Saxon youths exposed for sale in the slave-market at Rome. "Who are they?" he asked. "Angles," was the reply. "It suits them well," he said, "with faces so angel-like. From what country do they come?" "From Deiri," said the merchant. "*De ira!*"[1] exclaimed the pious monk, "then they must be delivered from the wrath of God. What is the name of their king?" "Aella," he was told. "Aella!" he replied, seizing on the word as of good omen, "then shall Alleluia be sung in his land."

Augustine proceeded to Kent, where he was kindly received by Ethelbert. The king had married Bertha, a Frankish princess of Christian training, through whose influence his pagan prejudices had been largely overcome. When, by means of interpreters, Augustine had set forth the nature of Christianity in a lengthy address, the king said: "Your words and promises are very fair; but as they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot approve of them so far as to forsake that which I have so long followed with the whole English nation. But because you are come from far into my kingdom, and, as I conceive, are desirous to impart to us those things which you believe to be true and most beneficial, we will not molest you, but give you favorable entertainment, and take care to supply you with your necessary sustenance; nor do we forbid you to preach and gain as many as you can to your religion."[2]

[1] Latin, meaning "*from the wrath.*"

[2] Bede, "Ecclesiastical History," Bk. I. chap. xxv.

The missionaries took up their residence at Canterbury. Christianity made rapid progress. Within a year from the landing of Augustine upon the shores of Kent, Ethelbert and thousands of his people became Christians. Missionary zeal carried the new religion to other parts of England. Edwin, the powerful king of Northumbria, was led to call a council for the purpose of considering its adoption. An aged ealderman arose and spoke as follows: "So seems life, O King, as a sparrow's flight through the hall where a man is sitting at meat in winter-tide with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the chill rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door and tarries for a moment in the light and heat of the hearth-fire, and then flying forth from the other, vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight, but what is before it and what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tell us aught certainly of these, let us follow it."

The native seriousness of the Anglo-Saxon character offered a favorable soil for the growth of Christianity. The gospel was peculiarly adapted to the needs of this people. In restraining brutal pleasures, inculcating benevolent affections, and promoting intellectual culture, it supplied what was wanting in English character, and imparted an element essential to the highest development of the national life. England was once more brought in line with the highest European civilization; and the culture, arts, and sciences that had fled before the pagan conquerors returned with Christianity.

Education followed in the wake of Christianity. The cathedral and monastic schools became the principal edu-

cational agency. The course of instruction embraced the so-called seven liberal arts, — grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music, — to which seven years were devoted. Latin, the language of the church, was made the basis of education, and nearly all instruction had a theological or ecclesiastical aim. The great body of the people remained illiterate, and even kings were sometimes unable to write their names. Their energies were absorbed in almost continual wars and in the stern struggle to gain a livelihood; and under these conditions it is needless to say that beyond ecclesiastical or monastic circles literature hardly existed.

In this period England had its share of ecclesiastical scholars, among whom were Alcuin and Bede. The home of the former was at York, one of the principal centres of culture, where in 766 he became master of the cathedral school. Afterward he went to the Continent, residing at the court of Charlemagne. He reorganized the palace school, and afterward undertook to reform the system of education throughout the emperor's dominions. His numerous writings were occupied chiefly with theology and education. He wrote a number of text-books, and in the preface of one of them he warmly commends study: "Oh ye, who enjoy the youthful age, so fitted for your lessons, learn! Be docile. Lose not the day in idle things. The passing hour, like the wave, never returns again. Let your early years flourish with the study of the virtues, that your age may shine with great honors. Use these happy days. Learn, while young, the art of eloquence, that you may be a safeguard and defender of those whom you value. Acquire the conduct and man-

ners so beautiful in youth, and your name will become celebrated through the world. But as I wish you not to be sluggish, so neither be proud. I worship the recesses of the devout and humble breast."

In a poem on the "Saints of the Church of York," Alcuin pays a beautiful tribute to Ælbert, his predecessor as master of the cathedral school, who, after instruction in the liberal arts, led his students to the Scriptures: —

> "Then, last and best, he opened up to view
> The depths of Holy Scripture, Old and New.
> Was any youth in studies well approved,
> Then him the master cherished, taught, and loved;
> And thus the double knowledge he conferred
> Of liberal studies and the Holy Word."

Bede may be justly regarded as the father of English prose. From an interesting autobiographical sketch at the close of his "Ecclesiastical History," we learn the leading events in his unpretentious life. He was born in 673, near the monastery of Jarrow in northern England. As pupil, deacon, and priest, he passed his entire life in that monastic institution. The leisure that remained to him after the faithful performance of his various official duties, he assiduously devoted to learning; for he always took delight, as he tells us, "in learning, teaching, and writing." He was an indefatigable worker, and wrote no less than forty-five separate treatises, including works on Scripture, history, hymnology, astronomy, grammar, and rhetoric, in which is embodied all the learning of his age.

His scholarship and aptness as a teacher gave celebrity to the monastic school at Jarrow, which was attended at one time by six hundred monks in addition to many secu-

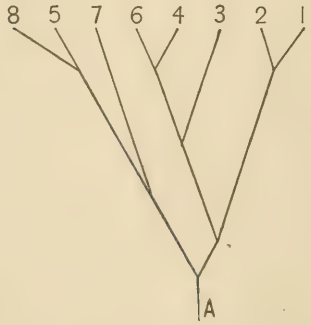
lar students. His fame extended as far as Rome, whither he was invited by Pope Sergius, who wished the benefit of his counsel. He led an eminently simple, devout, and earnest life. He declined the dignity of abbot, lest the duties of the office might interfere with his studies. As a writer he was clear, succinct, and artless. His "Ecclesiastical History," which was composed in Latin, is our chief source of information in regard to the early Anglo-Saxon church. The credulity he exhibits in regard to ecclesiastical miracles was characteristic of his time.

His pupil Cuthbert has left us a pathetic account of his death. Industrious to the last, he was engaged on an Anglo-Saxon version of St. John. It was Wednesday morning, the 27th of May. One of his pupils, who was acting as scribe, said to him: "Dearest master, there is still one chapter wanting; do you think it troublesome to be asked any more questions?" He answered: "It is no trouble. Take your pen and write fast." In the afternoon he called his friends together, distributed a few simple gifts, and then amidst their tears bade them a solemn farewell. At sunset his scribe said: "Dear master, there is yet one sentence not written." He answered: "Write quickly." "It is finished now," said the scribe at last. "You have spoken truly," the aged scholar replied; "it is finished. Receive my head into your hands, for it is a great satisfaction to me to sit facing the holy place where I was wont to pray." And thus on the pavement of his little cell, in the year 735, he quietly passed away with the last words of the solemn chant, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost."

Thus closed the life of the first great English scholar.

Not inaptly did later ages style him the Venerable Bede. "First among English scholars, first among English theologians, first among English historians, it is in the monk of Jarrow that English literature strikes its roots. In the six hundred scholars who gathered round him for instruction, he is the father of our national education. In his physical treatises he is the first figure to which our science looks back." [1]

The Old English or Anglo-Saxon, which was first reduced to writing after the establishment of Christian schools, belongs to the Aryan or Indo-European group of languages. The other principal members of this group, besides the Teutonic branch to which the Anglo-Saxon belongs, are the Indic, the Iranic, the Hellenic, the Italic, the Celtic, and the Slavonic. They all sprang originally from the same mother-tongue, the home of which is commonly supposed to have been central Asia. Their relationship is clearly established by the substantial identity of many words and grammatical forms. The following diagram shows the relative age and remoteness from each other of these different branches or classes, together with the dates of their earliest literary records: —



A. Aryan or Indo-European Stock.
1. Indic, Sanskrit Vedas, 1500 B.C.
2. Iranic, Bactrian Avesta, 1000 B.C.
3. Hellenic, Greek, 800 B.C.
4. Italic, Latin, 200, B.C.
5. Teutonic, Gothic Bible, fourth century.
6. Celtic, eighth century.
7. Slavonic, Bulgarian Bible, fourth century.
8. Anglo-Saxon, eighth century.

[1] Green, "History of the English People," Vol. 1.

The Anglo-Saxon belongs to the Teutonic branch of the Aryan family, and is closely related, on the one hand, to German, and on the other to Scandinavian. It is an inflected language with four cases. In England it was divided into four dialects, — the Northumbrian, the Mercian, the Kentish, and the West Saxon. Most of our Anglo-Saxon remains are in the West Saxon dialect, though it is from the Mercian, which was spoken in central England, that modern English is most directly derived. The Lord's Prayer in Anglo-Saxon, with an interlinear translation, will serve for illustration.

Ure Fæder, thu the eart on heofonum, si thin nama gehalgod.
Our Father, thou who art in [the] heavens, be thy name hallowed.
Tocume thin rice. Geweorthe thin willa on eorthan swa-swa
May come thy kingdom. Be thy will on earth as
on heofonum. Sele us to-dæg urne dæg-hwamlican hlaf. And
in [the] heavens. Give us to-day our daily bread (loaf). And
forgif us ure gyltas swa-swa we fogifath urum gyl-tendum. And ne
forgive us our guilts as we forgive our guilty ones. And not
læd thu us on costnunge. Ac alys us from yfel. Si hit swa.
lead thou us into temptation. But release us from evil. Be it so.

The first literature of a people is poetry. In national as in individual life, the imagination is active during the period of youth. Among the Anglo-Saxons, as among some other nations, narrative poems, before they were reduced to writing, were sung by the wandering gleeman, —

> "A man of celebrity, mindful of rhythms,
> Who ancient tradition treasured in memory,
> New word-groups found properly bound." [1]

[1] "Beowulf," xiv.

The most pleasing picture that comes to us from the early days of our English forefathers, is that of the scop or gleeman at their feasts. While the stern warriors sit at their long tables and quaff their mead in the large hall hung with shields and armor, and lighted by great blazing logs on the hearth, the rude poet, to the sound of his harp, recounts the deeds of heroes in rhythmical song.

The principle of Anglo-Saxon poetry is not rhyme nor metre, but alliteration. Each line is divided into two parts by a cæsura, and two principal words of the first hemistich, and one of the second, regularly begin with the same consonant. If these principal words begin with vowels, they are different. Parallelism — the repetition of the same thought in different words, as in Hebrew poetry — is also common. The following extract from "Beowulf" exhibits the Anglo-Saxon alliterative form: —

> "His *a*rmor of *i*ron — *o*ff him he did then,
> His *h*elmet from his *h*ead — to his *h*enchman committed,
> His *ch*ased-handled *ch*ain-sword, — *ch*oicest of weapons,
> And *b*ade him *b*ide, — with his *b*attle-equipment."

The language of Anglo-Saxon poetry is abrupt, elliptical, and highly metaphorical, but often of great energy. The range of ideas is necessarily limited. From what we already know of the life and character of the Angles and Saxons, it is not difficult to understand the spirit of their poetry. Not love, but war and religion form its leading themes. Its prevailing tone, especially of that portion which contains an echo of the continental home of the Angles and Saxons, is one of sadness. The inhospitable climate of northern Germany, and the stern struggle for

existence on land and sea, made life a deeply serious thing. Human agency was felt to be weak in comparison with the great invisible forces of nature. The sense of fate and death weighed heavily on the Anglo-Saxon mind. Thus, in "The Wanderer," a poem of an unknown author, we read: —

"Earth is enwrapped in the lowering tempest,
Fierce on the stone-cliff the storm rushes forth,
Cold winter-terror, the night-shade is darkening,
Hail-storms are laden with death from the north.
All full of hardships is earthly existence —
Here the decrees of the Fates have their sway —
Fleeting is treasure and fleeting is friendship —
Here man is transient, here friends pass away.
Earth's widely stretching, extensive domain,
Desolate all — empty, idle, and vain."[1]

The Anglo-Saxon literature that has been preserved to us, though of small extent, is of incalculable value, not so much for its intrinsic merit as for the light it throws on the life and character of our Teutonic ancestors. About thirty thousand lines of poetry and a few prose works have come down to us. This literature, especially the poetical part of it, shows us the force of thought and imagination which they possessed as a racial inheritance. It reveals to us their manner of life; but above all, it shows us the depth of soul with which they contemplated the mysteries of existence, and the courage with which they met its inevitable hardships and duties. The literature of the Anglo-Saxon reveals to us a nation strong in its mental and moral potentialities — the substructure on which was to be built English and American civilization.

[1] Translation of W. R. Sims.

Cædmon, the earliest of English poets, lived in the latter part of the seventh century. He has with justice been called "the Milton of our forefathers"; and his poems are strongly suggestive of "Paradise Lost." He seems to have been a laborer on the lands attached to the monastery of St. Hilda at Whitby, and was advanced in years before his poetical powers were developed. When at festive gatherings it was agreed that all present should sing in turn, Cædmon was accustomed, as the harp approached him, quietly to retire with a humiliating sense of his want of skill. Having left the banqueting hall on one occasion, he went to the stable, where it was his turn to care for the horses. In a vision an angel appeared to him and said: "Cædmon, sing a song to me." He answered: "I cannot sing; for that is the reason why I left the entertainment, and retired to this place." "Nevertheless," said the heavenly visitor, "thou shalt sing." "What shall I sing?" inquired the poet, as he felt the movement of an awakening power. "Sing the beginning of created things," said the angel.

His mission was thus assigned him. In the morning the good abbess Hilda, with a company of learned men, witnessed an exhibition of his newly awakened powers; and concluding that heavenly grace had been bestowed upon him, she bade him lay aside his secular habit and received him into the monastery as a monk. Here he led a humble, exemplary life in the exercise of his poetic gifts. "He sang the creation of the world, the origin of man, and all the history of Genesis; and made many verses on the departure of the children of Israel out of Egypt, and their entering into the Land of Promise, with

many other histories from Holy Writ . . . by which he endeavored to turn away all men from the love of vice, and to excite in them the love of, and application to, good actions."[1]

The following description of the Creation illustrates Cædmon's manner of amplifying the Scripture narrative: —

"There was not yet then here,
Except gloom like a cavern,
Any thing made.
But the wide ground
Stood deep and dim,
For a new lordship
Shapeless and unsuitable.
On this with his eyes he glanced,
The King stern in mind,
And the joyless place beheld.
He saw the dark clouds
Perpetually press
Black under the sky,
Void and waste;
Till that this world's creation
Through the word was done
Of the King of Glory."

Though rude in form, Cædmon's Paraphrase contains genuine poetry. It is the product of admirable genius, but genius fettered by unfavorable surroundings and lack of culture.

The most important Anglo-Saxon poem that has descended to us is "Beowulf," a primitive epic of some three thousand lines. It was probably composed in its present form in the eighth century, but the events it celebrates

[1] Bede, "Ecclesiastical History."

are of a much earlier date. It brings before us the spirit and manners of our forefathers, before they left their continental home. The hero of the poem is Beowulf: —

"Of heroes then living
He was the stoutest and strongest, sturdy and noble."

Sailing to the land of the Danes, he slew a monster of the fens called Grendel, whose nightly ravages brought dismay into Hrothgar's royal palace. After slaying the fiend of the marshes and his mother beneath the waters, Beowulf, loaded with presents and honors, returned to Sweden, where he became king, and ruled fifty years. But at last, in slaying a fire-dragon "under the earth, nigh to the sea-wave," he was mortally wounded. His body was burned on a lofty funeral pyre amidst the lamentations of his vassals.

Such in brief is the story of this epic of heroic daring and achievement, in which the old Teutonic character is reflected in its fulness. Its details are full of interest. The fierceness of northern seas and skies is brought before us. We assist at mead-hall banquets, in which gracious queens and beautiful maidens hand the ale cup. The loyalty of liegemen is beautifully portrayed. A stern sense of honor prevails among the rude warriors: —

"Death is more pleasant
To every earlman than infamous life is."

Their courage is dauntless, and words count for less than actions. Beowulf thus states to the queen the object of his visit: —

"I purposed in spirit when I mounted the ocean,
When I boarded my boat with a band of my liegemen,

I would work to the fullest the will of your people,
Or in foe's-clutches fastened fall in the battle.
Deeds I shall do of daring and prowess,
Or the last of my life-days live in this mead-hall."

The poem concludes with the following lines in praise of Beowulf: —

"'Round the dead-mound rode then the doughty-in-battle,
Bairns of all twelve of the chiefs of the people,
More would they mourn, lament for their ruler,
Speak in measure, mention him with pleasure,
Weighed his worth, and his warlike achievements
Mightily commended, as 'tis meet one praise his
Liegelord in words and love him in spirit,
When forth from his body he fares to destruction.
So lamented mourning the men of the Geats,
Fond-loving vassals, the fall of their lord,
Said he was kindest of kings under heaven,
Gentlest of men, most winning of manner,
Friendliest to folk-troops and fondest of honor." [1]

Other Anglo-Saxon poems that deserve mention are "The Seafarer," "Deor's Complaint," "The Fight at Maldon," and "Judith." The former deal with the hardships and sorrows of life; the latter breathe the martial spirit of the Teutonic race. Besides these and other secular poems, there is a cycle of religious poetry dating from the eighth or ninth centuries. It was stimulated by the work of Cædmon. "Others after him," says Bede, "tried to make religious poems, but none could vie with him, for he did not learn the art of poetry from men, nor of men, but from God." This religious poetry is usually based on Scripture or on legends of saints. Cynewulf, a North-

[1] Translation of J. L. Hall.

umbrian poet of the eighth century, was the author of several religious poems of acknowledged excellence, among which are the "Passion of St. Juliana," the "Christ," and "Elene, or the Finding of the Cross."

Not many sovereigns deserve a place in literature because of their own writings. But Alfred was as great with the pen as with the sword. His history, around which legendary stories have gathered, reads in its reality like a piece of fiction. Known ages ago as the "darling of the English," he grows in greatness with the passing years. The unfavorable surroundings of his life serve as a foil to set off his virtues.

He was born in 849. A part of his childhood was spent in Rome, while much of its ancient splendor still remained. At the residence of King Æthelwulf, his father, he learned not only the manly sports of the Anglo-Saxon youth, — running, leaping, wrestling, hunting, — but also the various occupations pertaining to the household, the workshop, and the tilling of the soil. He had a passion for the heroic songs of his people, and even before learning to read he had committed many of them to memory. Blessed with a healthful precocity of mind, he treasured up all this varied knowledge, and utilized it with rare wisdom in after years.

At the age of twenty-three he ascended the throne, and spent a considerable part of his subsequent life in conflict with the Danes, who in great numbers were making a descent upon the cultivated districts of England and France for the sake of pillage. At one time he was reduced to the extremity of fleeing with a few followers before the pagan invaders. But adversity, as with every

vigorous nature, called forth a greater energy and determination. Gathering about him a body of strong and true men, he at length turned upon the foe, surprised and defeated them, and conquered a favorable peace. By the superior military organization of his people, by the founding of an English navy, and, above all, by his preëminent ability as a commander, he succeeded in repelling all subsequent attacks by the northern invaders, and saved England to the Anglo-Saxon race.

In the leisure that followed his treaties of peace, Alfred devoted himself assiduously to the elevation and welfare of his people. He rebuilt ruined towns, restored demolished monasteries, established a fixed code of laws, and encouraged every form of useful industry. The king himself set the example of diligent labor. By means of six wax candles, which, lighted in succession, burned twenty-four hours, he introduced a rigid system into his work. He carried with him a little book in which he noted the valuable thoughts that occurred to him from time to time. When he came to the throne, the learning which a century before had furnished Europe with some of its most eminent scholars had fallen into decay. "To so low a depth has learning fallen among the English nation," he says, "that there have been very few on this side of the Humber who were able to understand the English of their service, or to turn an epistle out of Latin into English; and I know that there were not many beyond the Humber who could do it."

With admirable tact and wisdom he set about remedying the evil. He studied Latin himself that he might provide his people with useful books; he invited learned

scholars from the Continent to his court; and he established in the royal palace a school for the instruction of noble youth. His efforts were grandly successful; and in less than a generation England was again blessed with intelligence and prosperity. Among the books he translated into Anglo-Saxon were Bede's "Ecclesiastical History"; Orosius's "Universal History," the leading textbook on that subject in the monastic schools for several centuries; and Boethius's "Consolations of Philosophy," a popular book among thoughtful people during the Middle Ages. These translations were not always literal. Alfred rather performed the work of editor, paraphrasing, omitting, adding, as best served his purpose. In the work of Boethius he frequently departed from the text to introduce reflections of his own. To him belongs the honor of having furnished England with its first body of literature in the native tongue.

He died in 901. The governing purpose of his life he pointed out in a single sentence: "This I can now truly say, that so long as I have lived, I have striven to live worthily, and after my death to leave my memory to my descendants in good works." In him the Anglo-Saxon stock reached its highest development. His character was based on a profound belief in the abiding presence of God. But rising above the ascetic spirit of his time, he devoted himself to the duties of his royal station. To great vigor in action he added the force of patient and invincible endurance. While he watched with capacious intellect over the interests of his entire realm, he led with great simplicity a genial and affectionate life with his family and friends. After ages have made no mistake in calling him Alfred the Great.

MIDDLE ENGLISH OR FORMATIVE PERIOD.

PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

HISTORY. — "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" (concluded 1154).

William of Malmesbury (1095–1142), Latin Chronicler. "De Gestis Regum Anglorum," etc.

Matthew Paris (1195–1259), Latin Chronicler. "Historia Major," etc.

METRICAL CHRONICLES. — Layamon (twelfth century), "Brut," or Chronicles of Britain.

Robert of Gloucester († 1300), "Rhyming Chronicles of Britain."

Robert Manning († 1270), "Chronicles of England."

RELIGION. — John Wycliffe (1324–1384). Tracts, Sermons, Translation of the Bible.

Ormin (thirteenth century), "Ormulum."

Langland (fourteenth century), "Vision of Piers the Plowman."

MISCELLANEOUS POETRY. — John Gower (1327–1408), "Speculum Meditantis" (French), "Vox Clamantis" (Latin), "Confessio Amantis" (English), etc.

GREAT REPRESENTATIVE WRITER.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

II.

MIDDLE ENGLISH OR FORMATIVE PERIOD.

(1066-1400.)

Limits of period — Normans — Their character — Norman Conquest — Modern English — Social condition of England — Existing evils — Literary development — Esteem for learning — *Trouvère* poetry — "Chanson de Roland" — Arthurian cycle — Italian influence — History, romance, religion — "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" — Latin Chroniclers — Lyrical poetry — Layamon's "Brut" — Robert of Gloucester — Robert Manning — Wycliffe — Ormin — Langland — Gower — CHAUCER.

THE designation Middle English or Formative Period is applied to the centuries lying between the Norman Conquest and the death of Chaucer. It is a period of great importance for English history and English literature. England passed under a succession of alien rulers, the state of society underwent a great change, and our language approached its modern form.

The name of Normans is given to the Scandinavians who, at the beginning of the tenth century, conquered a home in the northern part of France. They speedily adopted the language and customs of the subjugated country, and rapidly advanced in refinement and culture. By intermarriage with the native population, a vivacious Celtic element was introduced into the grave Teutonic dis-

position. Though of kindred blood with the Anglo-Saxons, the Normans, by their stay in France, developed a new, and in many respects admirable, type of character.

Along with their native Teutonic strength they acquired a versatile and imitative temper, which made them accessible to new ideas, and prepared them to be leaders in general progress. Losing their slow, phlegmatic temperament, they became impulsive and impatient of restraint. Their intellects acquired a nimble quality, quick in discernment and instantaneous in decision. Delicacy of feeling produced aversion to coarse pleasures. They delighted in a gay social life, with hunting, hawking, showy equipage, and brilliant festivities. Diplomacy in a measure supplanted daring frankness. Brilliant superficiality took the place of grave thoughtfulness. Such were the people that were to rule in England, to introduce their language and customs, and, amalgamated at last, to impart a needed element to the English character.

In 1066 William, Duke of Normandy, landed on the English coast to enforce his claim to the English throne. In the battle of Hastings he gained a complete victory over the force under Harold, and won the title of Conqueror. He distributed England in the form of fiefs among his followers, and reduced the Anglo-Saxon population to a condition of serfdom. Feudal castles were erected in every part of England; and the barons or lords, supported by the labors of a great body of dependants, lived in idleness and luxury. These baronial residences became centres of knightly culture. Here noble youths acquired courtly graces, and wandering minstrels entertained the assembled household with their songs. Brilliant

tournaments from time to time brought together the beauty and chivalry of the whole realm. French became the social language of the ruling classes; and the Anglo-Saxons, reduced to servitude, were despised. It required many generations to break down this harsh antagonism.

But toward the close of the period, especially in the fourteenth century, the people of England became more homogeneous. The Normans coalesced with the Anglo-Saxons, and added new elements to the English character. At the same time the Anglo-Saxon language, which had hitherto maintained its highly inflected character, made a gradual transition into modern English. It gave up its complicated inflections, and received into its vocabulary a host of foreign elements, chiefly from the French. The new tongue, which gradually supplanted French and Latin, gained official recognition in 1362, when it became the language of the courts of law; and the following year it was employed in the speech made at the opening of Parliament.

The social condition of England in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was intimately related to the first great outbreak of English literature. A restraint was set upon absolutism by the provisions of the Great Charter. The growth of cities and towns had been rapid, and there existed in all parts of England a wealthy and influential citizen class. The serfs of the time of the Conquest had risen to the rank of free peasants. Parliament was divided into two bodies, and the people acquired a growing influence in the affairs of government. The amalgamation of the two races that had lived side by side for centuries was gradually completed, and the great English nation, in its

modern form, had its beginning — a nation that in its type of character is second to none in the history of the world.

But many evils still existed. The nobility lived in luxury and extravagance, while the peasants lived in squalor and want. The public taste was coarse, and the state of morals low. Highwaymen rendered travel unsafe. Through gross abuses of its power and the extensive corruption of its representatives, the church had in large measure lost its hold upon the people. Immense revenues, five times greater than that of the crown, were paid into the coffers at Rome. Half the soil of England was in the hands of the clergy. The immorality of the friars was notorious, and provoked vigorous denunciation and resistance. Yet there were faithful pastors and prelates, who, like Chaucer's poor parson, taught "Christes lore" and followed it themselves; and magnificent cathedrals were built to stand as objects of admiration for succeeding ages.

As compared with the preceding period, literature exhibits great expansion. It gained in variety and extent — a result that was due to a number of coöperative causes. The crusades had a stimulating effect in Europe, and brought new ideas into vogue. The caliphs of Bagdad and Cordova became rivals in the patronage of learning, and for a time the Arabians became the intellectual leaders of Europe. Their schools in Spain were largely attended by Christian youths from other European countries, who carried back with them to their homes the Arabian science, and through it gave a new impulse to learning in Christian nations.

During this period learning was held in greater esteem

and prosecuted with greater vigor throughout Christian Europe. The monastic and cathedral schools were generally improved. The growth of towns and cities led to the establishment of burgher schools for secular education. Learning was no longer confined to representatives of the church. The first great universities were founded in this period — those of Bologna, Salerno, and Paris in the twelfth century. The oldest colleges of Oxford and Cambridge date from this period. The universities were often attended by enormous numbers of students from every part of Europe; there were as many as twenty thousand at the University of Paris at one time. "A new fervor of study," to use the words of Green, "sprang up in the West from its contest with the more cultured East. Travellers, like Adelard of Bath, brought back the first rudiments of physical and mathematical science from the schools of Cordova or Bagdad. In the twelfth century a classical revival restored Cæsar and Virgil to the list of monastic studies. The scholastic philosophy sprang up in the schools of Paris. The Roman law was revived by the imperialist doctors of Bologna. The long mental activity of feudal Europe broke up like ice before a summer's sun."[1]

In France the *trouvère* produced long narrative poems, full of legend, war, and chivalry. These poems are grouped in three principal cycles, of which Charlemagne, Alexander, and King Arthur are respectively the heroes. They are known as "Chansons de Geste," and were very popular in France and England. They were sung or recited by minstrels, and in England elevated the taste, supplied literary materials, and exerted no small influence on

[1] "History of English People," Vol. I, 198.

the language. The principal poem of the Carlovingian cycle is the "Chanson de Roland," an epic of four thousand lines, filled with chivalrous spirit and heroic deeds. The historic event which it commemorates was the invasion of Spain by Charlemagne in the eighth century. On the emperor's return, his rear-guard, under the command of Roland, one of his principal paladins, was treacherously attacked in the passes of the Pyrenees and slain. But before he died Roland sounded his miraculous horn, and Charlemagne, who was thirty leagues in advance, returned and avenged his death. The poem dates from the eleventh century; and, according to an old chronicle, the minstrel Taillefer rode in front of the Norman line at the battle of Hastings, and, while he tossed his sword in the air and caught it again, he sang the song of Roland. The following lines, describing Roland's death, will serve for illustration: —

"Count Roland lies beneath a pine,
His pallid face is turned to Spain.
His memory reverts unto the past,
Recalling countries he had won,
Fair France, and all his family,
And Charlemagne, his sovereign lord,
And Frenchmen loyal unto him.
He cannot keep from sighs and tears,
But not forgetful of himself,
He begs forgiveness of his Lord." [1]

The Arthurian cycle is still more important for English literature. Near the middle of the twelfth century,

[1] "Li quens Rollanz se jut desuz un pin:
Envers Espaigne en ad turnet sun vis.
De plusurs choses à remembrer li prist," etc.
Lines 2375–2384.

Geoffrey of Monmouth, a Welsh priest, wrote in Latin what purported to be a history of Britain from the days when Brut, the grandson of Æneas, landed on its shores, down to the death of Cadwallo in 689. It contains the story of the Celtic king, Arthur, and his Round Table. It crossed the Channel, where Norman *trouvères* expanded and completed the Arthurian legends. Returning to England, these legends, as we shall see, were embodied in a long and popular Middle English or semi-Saxon epic, containing the characters and incidents rendered familiar in Tennyson's "Idyls of the King."

Italy exerted an influence scarcely less than that of France upon the development of English literature. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Italy was in advance of the rest of Europe in intellectual culture. Before Chaucer was born, Dante had written the "Divina Commedia," one of the world's imperishable poems. Petrarch, whose life covers the first three-quarters of the fourteenth century, was an enthusiastic student of the ancient classics. He may justly be regarded as the forerunner of the humanists, who in the following century brought about the great intellectual movement known as the revival of learning. Boccaccio, his great contemporary, gave himself likewise to the study of antiquity. He translated the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey"; but his principal work was the "Decameron," a collection of a hundred stories, to which, as will appear later, our literature is considerably indebted. The culture of Italy not only stimulated intellectual activity in England, but also furnished models and materials for literary work.

During the period under consideration, the course of

English literature follows three principal streams, — history, romance, and religion. The "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," which contains the history of Britain from the invasion of Cæsar, was completed in 1154. Written in the form of brief annals, it is the work of many successive hands. King Alfred edited and expanded it. It is the earliest history of any Teutonic people in their own language. "From Alfred's time," says Freeman, "the narrative continues, sometimes full, sometimes meagre, sometimes a dry record of names and dates, sometimes rising to the highest flights of the prose picture or the heroic lay; but in one shape or other never failing us, till the pen dropped from the hand of the monk of Peterborough, who recorded the coming of Henry of Anjou." It contains, among other poems, "The Battle of Brunanburh," under date of 937, commemorating a Saxon victory over the Northmen: —

> "There was made flee the Northmen's chieftain,
> By need constrained, to the ship's prow
> With a little band. The bark drove afloat;
> The king departed on the fallow flood,
> His life preserved."

Among other chronicles, which here require no further mention, are the Latin works of William of Malmesbury in the twelfth, and of Matthew Paris in the thirteenth century.

Lyrical poems of adventure and sentiment, in which the influence of the *troubadour* may perhaps be traced, are not unknown. Robin Hood ballads were popular. The earliest English love-song that has been preserved was written about the year 1200. The following extract is modernized in spelling: —

"Blow, northern wind, send
Thou me my sweeting; blow
Northern wind, blow, blow, blow.
She is coral of goodness,
She is ruby of rich fulness,
She is crystal of clearness,
And banner of beauty."

The following poem on spring, which was written near the beginning of the thirteenth century, is full of blithe poetic feeling: —

"Sumer is i-cumen in
Lhude[1] sing, cuccu;
Groweth sed, and bloweth med,
And springeth the wde[2] nu.
Sing, cuccu, cuccu,
Awe bleteth after lamb,
Louth[3] after calve cu,
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth:
Murie sing, cuccu,
Well sings the cuccu,
Ne swik[4] thou never nu.
Sing, cuccu, nu,
Sing, cuccu."

Layamon's "Brut," or Chronicle of Britain, a poem of thirty-two thousand lines, is a paraphrase of Wace's French version of Geoffrey of Monmouth's Chronicle, or "Historia Britonum." It dates near the beginning of the thirteenth century. It retains the Anglo-Saxon or Old English vocabulary in its purity, less than fifty French words appearing in the whole poem. Its grammatical forms are known as semi-Saxon, and its verse wavers between the Old English alliteration and French rhyme and metre. All that is known

[1] Loud. [2] Wood. [3] Runneth. [4] Nor such.

of the author is contained in the opening lines, in which he gives an account of himself and his patriotic purpose.

"A priest was in the land,
Layamon was he hight.
He was Leovenath's son:
Gracious to him be the Lord!
He dwelt at Earnley,
Where are noble churches,
On the Severn's bank:
Well there he thought,
Not far from Radestone,
Where he read books.
It came in mind to him,
And in his chief thought,
That he would of the English
The noble deeds tell:
What they were called,
And whence they came,
Who the English land
First possessed."[1]

There are two other metrical chronicles which are interesting and valuable as showing the gradual change of the language during the Formative Period. Robert of

[1] "An preost wes on leoden,
Layamon wes ihoten.
He was Leouenathe's sone:
Lithe him beo drihte!
He wonede at Ernleye,
At aethelen are chirechen,
Uppon Seuarne stathe:
Sel thar him thuhte,
On fest Radestone,
Ther he bock radde.
Hit com him on mode
And on his mern thonke," etc.

(*Cir.* 1205.)

Gloucester wrote near the close of the thirteenth century. His work appears to be a translation of a French poem, which is dependent chiefly on the older chronicles already mentioned. It contains the story of King Lear, which begins as follows: —

"After King Bathulf, Lear his son was king,
And reigned sixty years well through everything,
Upon the Soar he built a famous city,
And called it Leicester after his own name.
Three daughters had this king, the eldest Goneril,
The middle one hight Regan, the youngest Cordelia.
The father loved them all enough, but the youngest most:
For she was best and fairest, and to haughtiness drew least."[1]

The poem contains ten thousand lines. It will be noted, in examining the original, that rhyme and metre, in imitation of the French, has been fully adopted.

The last of the metrical chroniclers was Robert Manning, who translated from a French original. His work dates from about 1330, and, as will be seen, the language has made considerable progress toward the modern form.

"Lordynges that be now here,
If ye will listene and lere[2]
All the storey of Inglande
Als[3] Robert Manning wryten it fand,

[1] "Aftur Kyng Bathulf, Leir ys sone was kyng,
And regned sixti yer wel thoru alle thing,
Up the water of Soure a city of gret fame
He endede, and clepede yt Leicestre, aftur ys owne name.
Thre doghtren this kyng hadde, the eldeste Gornorille,
The mydmost hatte Regan, the yongest Cordeille.
The fader hem louede alle enogh, ac the yongost mest:
For heo was best and fairest, and to hautenesse drow lest."
(*Cir.* 1275.)

[2] Learn. [3] As.

And on Inglysch has it schewed,
Not for the lerid [1] bot for the lewed,[2]
For tho [3] that in this land wonn [4]
That the Latyn ne Frankys conn." [5]

The chronicle professes to give the history of England from "the tyme of Sir Noe" to the last of the Celtic kings.

Religion has a prominent place in literature. As one of the great interests of our race, it has given rise, directly and indirectly, to a vast body of writings. This is particularly true of the English people, whose history and character have led them to give much thought to ecclesiastical and religious truth. The religious condition of England during the Middle English Period is reflected in several noteworthy works. The people of England were beginning to emancipate themselves from ecclesiastical tutelage; and while holding earnestly to religion, they were not slow in recognizing errors of doctrine and immorality of life on the part of representatives of the church.

Wycliffe, who has been called the morning star of the Reformation, was connected with the University of Oxford, where his learning, ability, and integrity gave him great influence. He was strongly anti-papal in his feeling, and denied the right of the pope to interfere in temporal matters. He maintained the preëminent authority of the Scriptures in matters of faith and duty. He promulgated his doctrines in tracts, and through an itinerant ministry, whom he organized and instructed. His principal claim, however, to a place in English literature, rests upon his translation of the Bible, which was completed

[1] Learned. [2] Ignorant. [3] Those. [4] Dwell. [5] Know.

about 1380. It is regarded as the earliest Middle English classic, and Marsh calls it "the golden book of Old English philology." The following extract will illustrate its style: "And he spak to hem this parable, and seide, What man of you that hath an hundrith scheep, and if he hath lost oon of hem, whethir he leeueth not nynti and nyne in desert, and goith to it that perischide, til he fynde it? And whanne he hath foundun it, he ioieth, and leyith it on his schuldris; and he cometh hoom, and clepith togidir hise freendis and neighboris, and seith to hem, Be ye glad with me, for I have founde my scheep, that hadde perischid. And I seie to you, so ioye shal be in heuene on o synful man doynge penaunce, more than on nynti and nyne iuste, that have no nede to penaunce."

Wycliffe's innovating and reformatory labors were not to pass unchallenged. He was summoned before different ecclesiastical courts, and condemned in several papal bulls; but he escaped punishment through the patronage of powerful friends, who sympathized with his teachings. He died in 1384. But his body was not permitted to rest in peace. His doctrines having been condemned by the Council of Constance, his body was exhumed and burned, and the ashes scattered on the Avon. His fate has been celebrated by Wordsworth in one of his ecclesiastical sonnets: —

> "This deed accurst,
> An emblem yields to friends and enemies,
> How the bold teacher's doctrine, sanctified
> By truth, shall spread, throughout the world dispersed."

An important work philologically is "Ormulum," a metrical paraphrase of those portions of the New Testament

appointed to be read in the daily service of the church, accompanied by a homily. It is named from its author, who was —

"Orrmin bi name nemmnedd."

The orthography of the poem is peculiar, as Ormin made it a rule to double the consonant after each short vowel. Its date may be fixed approximately at 1200. In the form in which it has come down to us, it comprises about twenty thousand lines. The following passage from the dedication will serve for illustration: —

"Nu, brotherr Wallterr, brotherr min
Affterr the flaeshess kinde;
And brotherr min i Crisstenndom
Thurrh fulluhht[1] and thurrh trowwthe;
And brotherr min i Godess hus,
Yet o the thride[2] wise,
Thurrh thatt witt[3] hafenn takenn ba[4]
An reġhellboc to follghenn,[5]
Unnderr kanunnkess had[6] and lif,
Swa summ[7] Sannt Awwstin sette;
Icc hafe don swa summ thu badd,
And forthedd te thin wille,
Icc hafe wennd inntill Ennglissh
Goddspelless hallghe lare[8]
Affterr thatt little witt tatt me
Min Drihhtin[9] hafeththe lenedd."

Still more important, for its historical and literary value, is Langland's "The Vision of William concerning Piers the Plowman," a poem of some twenty-five hundred lines, retaining the old Saxon alliteration. It sets forth in seven

[1] Through baptism.
[2] Third.
[3] We.
[4] Both.
[5] One rule book to follow.
[6] Canonhood.
[7] As.
[8] Holy lore.
[9] Lord.

"passus" or cantos a series of visions, in which the condition of the State and the Church is clearly reflected. "It was," says Marsh, "a calm, allegorical exposition of the corruptions of the State, of the Church, and of social life, designed, not to rouse the people to violent resistance or bloody vengeance, but to reveal to them the true causes of the evils under which they were suffering, and to secure the reformation of those grievous abuses by a united exertion of the moral influence which generally accompanies the possession of superior physical strength." It was written about 1362, and attained a wide popularity, no fewer than forty-five manuscripts being still extant. The opening lines are as follows: —

"In a somer seson whan soft was the sonne,
I shope me in shroudes[1] as I a shepe[2] were,
In habite as an heremite unholy of workes,
Went wyde in this world wondres to here.
As on a May mornynge on Malverne hulles,[3]
Me byfel a ferly of fairy,[4] me thoughte;
I was wery forwandred[5] and went me to reste
Under a brode banke bi a bornes[6] side,
And as I lay and lened and loked in the wateres,
I slombred in a slepyng it sweyved[7] so merye."

John Gower, a contemporary and friend of Chaucer, was of noble family. In dedicating a book to him, Chaucer styled him the "moral Gower," a term which has since adhered to his name and which indicates the prevailing purpose of his poetry. He wrote three principal poems, — the "Speculum Meditantis" in French, which has been lost,

[1] Arrayed myself in garments.
[2] Shepherd.
[3] Hills.
[4] Wonder of enchantment.
[5] Weary with wandering.
[6] Brook.
[7] Sounded.

the "Vox Clamantis" in Latin, and the "Confessio Amantis" in English. The "Confessio Amantis," or "Lover's Confession," is a dialogue between a lover and a priest of Venus. It is written in smooth iambic tetrameter verse, and contains, somewhat after the manner of the "Decameron," a succession of tales drawn from Ovid, French "Chansons de Geste," the Bible, Boccaccio, and other sources. "Gower had some effect," says Hallam, "in rendering the language less rude, and exciting a taste for verse; if he never rises, he never sinks low; he is always sensible, polished, perspicuous." In the original prologue, Gower tells us that the poem was written at the request of Richard II., who met him while rowing on the Thames: —

"And so befell as I came nigh
Out of my bote, whan he me sigh,
He bad me come into his barge.
And whan I was with him at large,
Amonges other thinges said,
He hath this charge upon me laid
And bad me do my besinesse,
That to his highe worthynesse
Some newe thing I shoulde boke,
That he himself it mighte loke
After the forme of my writing."

The language of Wycliffe's version of the Bible and of Gower's "Confessio Amantis" is in the Mercian dialect, or in the language spoken in central England. Chaucer wrote in the same dialect. It was largely through the influence of these three great writers, together with the influence of Oxford and Cambridge, that the language of central England gained the ascendency over the dialect of northern and southern England, and became the mother of Modern English.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER.

ABOVE all his contemporaries of the fourteenth century stands the figure of Geoffrey Chaucer. Among all the writers that we have considered, he is the first to show the spirit and freedom of the modern world. Two recent poets have accorded him generous recognition and praise. In his "Dream of Fair Women," Tennyson calls him "the morning star of song," —

> "Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose sweet breath
> Preluded those melodious bursts that fill
> The spacious times of great Elizabeth
> With sounds that echo still."

In a sonnet on Chaucer, Longfellow says: —

> "He is the poet of the dawn, who wrote
> The Canterbury Tales, and his old age
> Made beautiful with song; and as I read,
> I hear the crowing cock, I hear the note
> Of lark and linnet, and from every page
> Rise odors of ploughed field or flowery mead."

Like Homer in Greece, Chaucer stands preëminent in the early literature of England; and among the great English poets of subsequent ages, not more than three or four — Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton, Tennyson — deserve to be placed in the same rank.

As with some other great writers, comparatively little is known of Chaucer's life. The most painstaking investigations have been comparatively fruitless in details. He was

born in London about 1340. His father was a vintner, and it is not improbable that Geoffrey sometimes lent him assistance. In the "Pardoner's Tale" there is an interesting passage which shows Chaucer's acquaintance with the different French and Spanish wines, and which contains a warning against the dangers of drunkenness: —

> "A lecherous thing is wyne, and dronkenesse
> Is full of stryving and of wrecchednesse."

Nothing definite is known in regard to his education. The opinion formerly held that he studied at Cambridge or Oxford is without satisfactory foundation. Yet his works show that he was a man of learning. Besides his knowledge of French and Italian, he was acquainted with the classics, and with every other branch of scholastic learning current in his day.

In the year 1357 an authentic record shows him attached to the household of Lady Elizabeth, wife of Prince Lionel, in the capacity of a page. This position was highly favorable to his general culture. It gave him "the benefit of society of the highest refinement, in personal attendance on a young and spirited prince of the blood. He had his imagination fed by scenes of the most brilliant court festivities, rendered more imposing by the splendid triumphs with which they were connected." It secured him throughout his long career the advantage of royal patronage.

About the time he attained his majority, he fell in love with a lady of the court above his rank. His passion was not requited — a fact that inspired his earliest poem, "The Compleynte unto Pite." For several years he dared not reveal his affection; and when at last he did so, he found

pity dead in the lady's heart. But still he pleads for love, and vows a lasting fidelity: —

> "Let som streem of your light on me be sene
> That love and drede you, ay lenger the more.
> For, sothly, for to seyne, I bere the sore,
> And, though I be not cunning for to pleyne,
> For goddes love, have mercy on my peyne."

In 1359 he accompanied Edward III. in an invasion of France; and having been captured by the French, he was ransomed by the English king for sixteen pounds. He was long attached to the court; he filled various public offices, and served on no fewer than seven diplomatic embassies to the Continent. Among other positions, he filled the office of comptroller of customs in the port of London; but, like many others of strong literary bent, he appears to have felt the irksomeness of his routine duties. In an autobiographic touch in the "Hous of Fame," we read: —

> "For whan thy labour doon al is,
> And hast y-maad thy rekeninges,
> In stede of reste and newe thinges,
> Thou gost hoom to thy house anoon;
> And, also domb as any stoon,
> Thou sittest at another boke,
> Til fully daswed [1] is thy loke,
> And livest thus as an hermyte,
> Although thyn abstinence is lyte." [2]

Before going to Italy on a diplomatic mission in 1378, Chaucer appointed Gower as one of his trustees to represent him in his absence. This fact seems to prove the existence of intimate relations between the two poets. If

[1] Dazed. [2] Little, small.

we may trust Gower's statement in a passage of the "Confessio Amantis," Chaucer was his disciple — though certainly greater than his master.

"And grete well Chaucer, when ye mete,
As my disciple and my poete.
For in the floures of his youth,
In sondry wise, as he well couth,
Of dittees and of songes glade,
The which he for my sake made,
The lond fulfilled is over all,
Whereof to him in speciall
Above all other I am most holde." [1]

The time and circumstances of Chaucer's marriage are involved in obscurity, though it is tolerably certain that his domestic life was unhappy. At all events, his references to marriage in his earlier writings are decidedly cynical. In the "Lenvoy de Chaucer a Bukton," he warns his friend, —

"But thou shalt have sorowe on thy flesh, thy lyf,
And been thy wyves thral."

In the "Tale of the Wyf of Bathe," the knight, after a year's inquiry and consideration, returns to the queen, and —

"'My lige lady, generally,' quod he,
'Wommen desyren to have sovereyntee
As wel over hir housbond as hir love,
And for to been in maistrie him above.'"

But elsewhere he calls marriage a "great sacrament," and declares that —

"A wyf is Goddes gifte verrayly."

[1] "Confessio Amantis," Bk. VIII.

In 1390 Chaucer superintended the erection of scaffolds in Smithfield for the use of the king and queen in viewing the tournament which took place there that year. He was no doubt present at the festivities. These facts will explain to us the minute acquaintance with the manner of conducting tournaments which the poet displays in the "Knight's Tale." Some of the details there given may be taken from the Smithfield lists: —

> "That such a noble theatre as it was
> I dar wel sayn that in this world ther nas.
> The circuit a myle was aboute,
> Walled of stoon, and diched al withoute."

But his political career was not one of uninterrupted prosperity. In 1386 he was elected a member of Parliament for the shire of Kent; but the same year, through a change in the government, he lost his office of comptroller of customs. This incident is supposed to have inspired the ballad on "Truth": —

> "Flee fro the prees,[1] and dwelle with sothfastnesse,[2]
> Suffyce unto[3] thy good, though hit be smal;
> For hord hath hate, and climbing tikelnesse,[4]
> Prees hath envye, and wile blent overal."[5]

In 1399, when he was again in financial straits, he sent to King Henry IV. a complaint about his poverty. It is entitled, "A Compleynt to his Purs": —

> "To you, my purse, and to non other wight
> Complayne I, for you be my lady dere!
> I am so sorry, now that ye be light;

[1] Crowd.
[2] Truth.
[3] Be content with.
[4] Instability.
[5] Happiness fails everywhere.

For certes, but ye make me hevy chere,
Me were as leef be leyd upon my bere;
For whiche unto your mercy thus I crye:
Beth hevy ageyn, or elles mot I dye."

This serio-comic piece was not fruitless, and four days afterward the king doubled the poet's pension.

In 1391 Chaucer prepared a prose treatise on the use of the astrolabe for his ten-year old son Lewis, who is supposed to have died not long afterward. In the preface he apologizes for the use of English, to which, however, his partiality is evident: "And Lewis, yif so be that I shewe thee in my lighte English as trewe conclusions touching this matere, and naught only as trewe but as many and as subtil conclusions as ben shewed in Latin in any commune tretis of the Astrolabie, con[1] me the more thank."

Chaucer died in circumstances of comfort and peace Oct. 25, 1400. His body lies in Westminster Abbey, where his tomb is an object of tender interest in the famous Poets' Corner.

In the "Prologue to Sir Thopas," the host of the Tabard and the leader of the Canterbury pilgrims draws the poet's portrait. After a most pathetic tale related by the prioress, Harry Bailly was the first to interrupt the silence: —

"And than at erst he loked upon me,
And seyde thus, 'what man arthow,' quod he;
'Thou lokest as thou woldest finde an hare,
For ever upon the ground I see thee stare.
Approache neer, and loke up merily.
Now war you, sirs, and let this man have place;
He in the waast is shape as wel as I;

[1] Grant.

This were a popet[1] in an arm t' embrace
For any womman, smal and fair of face.
He semeth elvish by his countenance,
For unto no wight dooth he daliaunce.' "

While the outward circumstances of Chaucer's life are so imperfectly known, we have abundant means to judge of his character and attainments. He is revealed to us in his writings. While associated with the court life of his time, he did not surrender himself to its vices and empty frivolities. He was not indifferent to the enjoyments of social life, but, at the same time, he set his heart on higher things. He recognized true worth wherever he found it, regardless of the accident of birth or wealth. He seems in no small measure to have embodied the integrity and gentleness which he bravely ascribes to the character of the gentleman in the "Tale of the Wyf of Bathe": —

"But for ye speken of swich gentillesse
As is descended out of old richesse,
That therefore sholden ye be gentil men,
Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.
Loke who that is most virtuous alway,
Privee and apert, and most entendeth ay
To do the gentil dedes that he can,
And tak him for the grettest gentil man.
Crist wol, we clayme of him our gentillesse,
Nat of our eldres for hir old richesse."

Though a man of large attainments, Chaucer was not overborne by the weight of his learning. His individuality had free play. In common with many other great poets, he was a prodigious borrower, using his lofty genius, not in the work of pure invention, but in glorifying ma-

[1] If this is spoken ironically, as seems to be the case, it indicates corpulency.

terials already existing. He is a striking illustration of the personal element in literature. Gower and Langland worked in the presence of the abundant literary materials of the fourteenth century; but only Chaucer had the ability to lay hold of it and mould it into imperishable popular forms.

He spent much time in reading and writing. In the "Legend of Good Women," he says: —

> "And as for me, though that I can but lyte,
> On bokes for to rede I me delyte,
> And to hem geve I feyth and ful credence,
> And in myn herte have hem in reverence
> So hertely, that ther is game noon
> That fro my bokes maketh me to goon."

And, as we read in the "Hous of Fame," he set his wit, —

> "To make bokes, songes, dytees,
> In ryme, or elles in cadence," —

and in his ardor of composition, —

> "Thou wolt make
> A-night ful ofte thyn heed to ake,
> In thy studie so thou wrytest,
> And ever-mo of love endytest."

Chaucer's love of nature was remarkable, and rivalled his passion for books. He tells us that there is nothing can take him from his reading, —

> "Save certeynly, whan that the month of May
> Is comen, and that I here the fowles singe,
> And that the floures ginnen for to springe,
> Farwel my book, and my devocioun."

His poetic nature responded to the beauties of the morning landscape, the matin carols of the birds, and the glories of the rising sun. The May-time, as may be seen from the prologue to the "Legend of Good Women," was his favorite season; and long before Burns and Wordsworth, he loved and sang of the daisy. The sight of this flower, as it opens to the sun, lightened his sorrow: —

> "And down on knees anon — right I me sette,
> And, as I coude, this fresshe flour I grette;
> Kneling alwey, til hit unclosed was,
> Upon the smale, softe, swote gras."

Chaucer's treatment of women in his works is full of interest. He is fond of satirizing the foibles supposed to be peculiar to their sex, and no pen was ever sharper. But he is not lost to chivalrous sentiment, and nowhere else can we find higher and heartier praise of womanly patience, purity, and truth. He appears to have written the "Legend of Good Women" as a kind of amends for the injustice done the sex in his earlier writings. And his real sentiments, let us hope, are found in the following lines: —

> "Alas, howe may we say on hem but well,
> Of whom we were yfostered and ybore,
> And ben all our socoure, and trewe as stele,
> And for our sake ful oft they suffre sore?
> Without women were all our joy ylore."

There are passages in his works that are very offensive to modern taste; but they are not to be charged so much to Chaucer's love of indecency as to the grossness of his age and to his artistic sense of fitness. This is his own

apology; and in the prologue to one of his most objectionable stories he begs his gentle readers —

> "For Goddes love, demeth not that I seye
> Of evel entente, but that I moot reherce
> Hir tales alle, albe they bettre or werse,
> Or elles falsen som of my matere."

Then he adds the kindly warning: —

> "And therfore, who-so list it nat y-here,
> Turne over the leef, and chese another tale."

The circumstances of Chaucer's life, as will have been noted, were favorable for the work he was to do in English literature. Langland wrote for the common people; Gower addressed himself to the educated; Chaucer, with a broader spirit, prepared his works for every class. His diligence as a student, his familiarity with the best society of his time, and his wide experience as a man of affairs at home and abroad gave him great mental breadth. When he reached the full maturity of his powers, he was admirably equipped in language, knowledge, and culture to produce works of surpassing excellence. In the fourteenth century, various dialects, as we have seen, existed in England; but from this linguistic confusion, to use the words of Marsh, "The influence and example of Chaucer did more to rescue his native tongue than any other single cause; and if we compare his dialect with that of any writer of an earlier date, we shall find that in compass, flexibility, expressiveness, grace, and in all the higher qualities of poetical diction, he gave it at once the utmost perfection which the materials at his hand would admit of." He made the Midland dialect, which he

used in common with Gower and Wycliffe, the national language.

Chaucer's literary career may be divided into three periods. The first period, which extends to his Italian journey in 1372, is characterized by the influence of French models. The two most important works of this period are the "Book of the Duchesse," written in 1369 on the death of Blanche, the first wife of John of Gaunt, and a translation of the "Roman de la Rose," a poem of twenty-two thousand lines dating from the preceding century. It is an allegorical presentation of "the whole art of love." Only a part of Chaucer's translation, which follows the original closely, has been preserved.

The second period, extending from 1373 to 1384, is characterized by an Italian influence, which showed itself in a more refined taste and more elegant handling of material. Within this period, Chaucer went to Italy on three different diplomatic missions. It is possible that he met Boccaccio and Petrarch. Be that as it may, his mission evidently led to a greater interest in Italian literature, which was then the most notable in Europe, and from which he borrowed some of his choicest stories. To the Italian period are to be ascribed, among other poems, "Troilus and Criseyde," taken from Boccaccio, and the "Hous of Fame," in which the influence of Dante can be clearly seen. Italy helped Chaucer to unfold and mature his strong native powers.

The third period in his literary career is distinctly English. Instead of depending upon foreign models, the poet walked independently in his conscious strength. It was during this period, extending from about 1384 to

the time of his death, that his greatest work — the "Canterbury Tales" — was produced. The idea of the work seems to have been suggested by Boccaccio's "Decameron." During the prevalence of the plague in Florence, in 1348, seven ladies and three gentlemen, all young, rich, and cultivated, retire to a beautiful villa a few miles from the city; and in order to pass the time more agreeably in their seclusion, they relate to one another a series of tales. Such is the plan of the "Decameron."

Chaucer adopted the idea of a succession of stories, but invented a happier occasion for their narration. One evening in April a company of twenty-nine pilgrims, of various conditions in life, meet at the Tabard, a London inn, on their way to the shrine of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury. At supper the jolly, amiable host offers to accompany them as guide; and in order to relieve the tedium of the journey, he proposes that each one shall tell two tales on the way to the tomb and the same number on their return. The one narrating the best tale is to receive a supper at the expense of the others.

The poet joins the party; and in the "Prologue" he gives us, with great artistic and dramatic power, a description of the pilgrims. The various classes of English society — a knight, a lawyer, a doctor, an Oxford student, a miller, a prioress, a monk, a farmer, and others — are all placed before us with marvellous distinctness. It is a living picture of contemporary life, showing us the features, dress, manners, customs, and social and religious interests of the English people in the latter half of the fourteenth century. Nothing escapes the microscopic scrutiny of the poet. Yet with

this keenness of observation and wonderful power to detect the peculiarities and foibles of men, there is no admixture of cynicism. There is humor and satire, but they are thornless. All of Chaucer's later writings are pervaded by an atmosphere of genial humor, kindness, tolerance, humanity.

Chaucer begins his sketches of the Canterbury pilgrims with the knight, a model of chivalrous heroism. Notwithstanding the great achievements of the knight in various parts of Europe and Africa, he still —

> "Was of his port as meke as is a mayde.
> He nevere yit no vileinye ne sayde
> In al his lyf unto no maner wight.
> He was a verray perfight gentil knight."

The portrait of the prioress, Madame Eglantine, —

> "That of hire smylyng was ful symple and coy," —

exhibits the poet's close observation : —

> "At mete wel i-taught was sche withalle;
> Sche leet no morsel from hire lippes falle,
> Ne wette hire fyngres in hire sauce deepe.
> * * * * * *
> But for to speken of hire conscience,
> Sche was so charitable and so pitous
> Sche wolde weepe if that sche sawe a mous
> Caught in a trappe, if it were deed or bledde."

The decadence of the church — the love of ease, pleasure, wealth, and power, that had taken possession of many of its representatives — is reflected in the sketches of the monk, the friar, and the pardoner, —

> "Whose walet lay byforn him in his lappe,
> Bret-ful of pardoun come from Rome al hoot."

The friar was a licentiate of his order, and —

"Ful sweetely herde he confessioun,
And plesaunt was his absolucioun;
He was an esy man to geve penaunce,
Ther as he wiste have a good pitaunce;
For unto a poure ordre for to give
Is signe that a man is wel i-schrive,
For if he gaf, he dorste make avaunt,
He wiste that a man was repentaunt."

But in contrast with these unworthy representatives of the church stands the "poure Persoun of a toun," showing us that genuine piety was not extinct. Chaucer seems to dwell with tender partiality upon the portrait: —

"A good man was ther of religioun,
And was a poure Persoun of a toun;
But riche he was of holy thought and werke.
He was also a lerned man, a clerk.
* * * * * *
He waytede after no pompe and reverence,
Ne makede him a spiced conscience,
But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
He taught, but first he folwede it himselve."

Among other characters that must be dismissed with a word is the Oxford student, —

"As lene was his hors as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake."

And the lawyer, —

"Nowher so besy a man as he ther nas,
And yit he seemede besier than he was."

And the doctor, —

"Who kepte that he wan in pestilence:
For gold in physik is a cordial,
Therefore he loved gold in special."

The tales that follow the "Prologue" — the whole number was never completed — are admirably adapted to the character of the narrators. They include the whole circle of mediæval literature, — the romance of chivalry, the legends of saints, the apologue and allegorical story, the theological treatise, and the coarse tale of immorality and cunning. The tales are told with ease, rapidity, and grace. They abound in humor and pathos; and among all the works composed on the same general plan, the "Canterbury Tales" is greatest.

ADDENDUM ON CHAUCER'S DICTION AND VERSIFICATION.

THE language of Chaucer exhibits the fusion of Teutonic and French elements. Dropping most of the Anglo-Saxon inflections, it passes from a synthetic to an analytic condition, in which the relations of words are expressed, not by different terminations, but by separate words. It is essentially modern, but the following peculiarities are to be noted. The plural of nouns is usually formed by the ending *es*, which is pronounced as a distinct syllable; but in words of more than one syllable, the ending is *s*. Instead of *es*, we sometimes meet with *is* and *us*. Some nouns which originally ended in *an* have *en* or *n*; as, *asschen*, ashes; *been*, bees; *eyen*, eyes. The possessive or genitive case, singular and plural, is usually formed by adding *es*; as, his *lordes* werre (wars); *foxes* tales. But *en* is sometimes used in the plural; as, his *eyen* sight. The dative case singular ends in *e*; as, *holte*, *bedde*. The adjective is inflected. After demonstrative and possessive adjectives and the definite article the adjective takes the ending *e*; as, the *yonge* sonne; his *halfe* cours. But in adjectives of more than one syllable this *e* is usually dropped. The plural of adjectives is formed by adding *e*; as, *smale* fowles. But adjectives of more than one syllable, and all adjectives in the predicate, omit the *e*. The comparative is formed by the addition of *er*, though the Anglo-Saxon form *re* is found in a few words; as, *derre*, dearer; *ferre*, farther. The personal pronouns are as follows: —

	SINGULAR.	PLURAL.
Nom.	I, ich, ik	we
Poss.	min (myn), mi (my)	our, oure
Obj.	me	us
Nom.	thou (thow, tow)	ye
Poss.	thin (thyn), thi (thy)	your, youre
Obj.	the, thee	yow, you

	Masculine.	*Feminine.*	*Neuter.*	*All Genders.*
Nom.	he	she, sche	hit, it, yt	thei, they
Poss.	his	hire, hir	his	here, her, hir
Obj.	him	hire, hir, here	hit, it, yt	hem

The present indicative plural of verbs ends in *en* or *e;* as, we *loven* or *love.* The infinitive ends in *en* or *e;* as, *speken*, *speke*, to speak. The present participle usually ends in *ynge* or *ynge.* The past participle of strong verbs ends in *en* or *e*, and (as well as the past participle of weak verbs) is often preceded by the prefix *y* or *i*, answering to the Anglo-Saxon and modern German *ge;* as, *ironne*, *yclept.* The following negative forms deserve attention: *nam*, am not; *nys*, is not; *nas*, was not; *nere*, were not; *nath*, hath not; *nadde*, had not; *nylle*, will not; *nolde*, would not; *nat*, *not*, *noot*, knows not. Adverbs are formed from adjectives by adding *e;* as, *brighte*, brightly; *deepe*, deeply.

The vowel sounds are closely akin to French and German. They may be indicated as follows: *a* long = *a* in *father; a* short = *a* in *aha. E* long = *a* in *date; e* short = *e* in *bed. I* long = *ee* in *sleep; i* short = *i* in *pin. O* long = *o* in *note; o* short = *o* in *not. U* long = French *u* or German *ü; u* short = *u* in *full. Ai*, *ei* = *ei* in *veil. Au*, *aw* = *ow* in *now. Ou*, *ow* = *ou* in *tour.*

Versification. — The prevailing metre in the "Canterbury Tales" is iambic pentameter in rhyming couplets. Occasionally there are eleven syllables in a line, and sometimes only nine. Short, unemphatic syllables are often slurred over; as, —

"Sche gad | *ereth* flour | es par | ty white | and rede."

Words from the French usually retain their native pronunciation; that is, are accented on the last syllable. Final *e* is usually sounded as a distinct syllable except before *h*, a following vowel, in the personal pronouns *oure*, *youre*, *hire*, *here*, and in many polysyllables. The *ed* of the past indicative and past participle, and the *es* of the plural and of the genitive, form separate syllables.

In exemplification of the foregoing rules, the opening lines of the "Prologue" are here divided into their component iambics: —

"Whan that | April | le, with | his schow | res swoote
The drought | of Marche | hath per | ced to | the roote,
And ba | thed eve | ry veyne | in swich | licour,
Of which | vertue | engen | dred is | the flour;

Whan Ze | phirus | eek with | his swe | te breethe
Enspi | red hath | in eve | ry holte | and heethe
The ten | dre crop | pes, and | the yon | ge sonne
Hath in | the Ram | his hal | fe cours | i-ronne,
And sma | le fow | les ma | ken me | lodie,
That sle | pen al | the night | with o | pen eye,
So pri | keth hem | nature | in here | corages: —
Thanne lon | gen folk | to gon | on pil | grimages,
And pal | mers for | to see | ken straun | ge strondes,
To fer | ne hal | wes, couthe | in son | dry londes;
And spe | cially | from eve | ry schi | res ende
Of En | gelond | to Caunt | terbury | they wende,
The ho | ly blis | ful mar | tir for | to seeke,
That hem | hath holp | en whan | that they | were seeke."

FIRST CREATIVE PERIOD.

PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

PRE-ELIZABETHAN. — William Caxton (1422–1491). First English printer, edited and printed ninety-nine works.

Sir Thomas More (1478–1535). Lord Chancellor, author of "Utopia" (1516) and "History of King Edward V." (1513).

Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey (1517–1547). Poet who introduced blank verse and the sonnet into English poetry.

Sir Thomas Wyat (1503–1542). Poet, satirist, sonneteer, strictly following Italian models.

ELIZABETHAN PROSE. — Roger Ascham (1515–1568). Tutor to Queen Elizabeth, author of "Toxophilus" (1545) and the "Schole-master" (1570).

John Lyly (1553–1606). Author of "Euphues" (1580), and dramatist.

Sir Philip Sidney (1554–1586). Author of "Arcadia" (1590) and "The Defense of Poesie" (1595).

Richard Hooker (1553–1600). Clergyman, and author of "Ecclesiastical Polity" (1592).

Sir Walter Raleigh (1552–1618). Soldier, sailor, courtier, statesman, historian, poet. Author of "Discovery of Guiana" (1596) and "History of the World" (1614).

POETRY. — Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset (1536–1608). Author of "Mirror for Magistrates" (1563) and of first English tragedy, "Gorboduc," acted before Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall in 1561.

Samuel Daniel (1562–1619). Author of "Civil Wars" (1595–1604), a poetical history of the Wars of the Roses.

Michael Drayton (1563–1631). Author of "Polyolbion" (1613–1622), a poem in thirty books descriptive of the topography of England.

DRAMA. — Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593). Author of "Tamburlaine the Great," "The Rich Jew of Malta," and "Doctor John Faustus"; a dramatist of great power, who has been called "a second Shakespeare."

Robert Greene (1560–1592). Author of "Alphonsus, King of Aragon," and other plays. In a pamphlet entitled "A Groat's Worth of Wit," he rails at Shakespeare as "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers."

Ben Jonson (1573–1637). Friend of Shakespeare, and author of many dramas, among which are "Every Man in his Humor," "Cynthia's Revels," "Sejanus," and "The Alchemist."

Philip Massinger (1584–1640). Author of thirty-eight dramas, among which are "The City Madam," "The Fatal Dowry," and "A New Way to Pay Old Debts." The last still keeps its place upon the stage.

John Webster (date of birth and death unknown) was strong in handling terrible subjects. Among his plays are "The Duchess of Malfi" and "The White Devil," which Hazlitt says come near to Shakespeare.

Thomas Dekker (1570–1637). Author of twenty-eight plays. His "Satiromastix" satirizes Ben Jonson. In another of his plays occur the oft-quoted lines, —

> "The best of men
> That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer;
> A soft, meek, patient, humble, tranquil spirit;
> The first true gentleman that ever breathed."

Francis Beaumont (1586–1615) and John Fletcher (1579–1625) were joint authors of fifty-two plays, among the best of which are "The Maid's Tragedy," "Cupid's Revenge," and "Philaster."

GREAT REPRESENTATIVE AUTHORS.

EDMUND SPENSER. FRANCIS BACON.
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

III.

FIRST CREATIVE PERIOD.

(1558–1625.)

Interest of period — Barren era after Chaucer — Revival of learning — Inventions — Caxton and the printing-press — The Reformation — Condition of England — Elizabeth's character — General progress — Influence on thought and character — Pre-Elizabethan literature — Old ballads — Thomas More — Earl of Surrey — Sir Thomas Wyat — Elizabethan outburst of literature — Ascham — Lyly — Sidney — Hooker — Raleigh — Elizabethan lyrics — Sackville, Daniel, Drayton — Origin of drama — Miracle plays — Moralities — First comedy and tragedy — Theatres — Minor dramatists — Ben Jonson — EDMUND SPENSER — FRANCIS BACON — WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

THIS period, which includes the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., is one of great interest. In the long course of English literature there is no other period that deserves more careful attention. It was the natural outcome of forces that had been accumulating for a hundred years. It is sometimes called the Elizabethan era, because the successful reign of that queen supplied the opportunity for a splendid manifestation of literary genius. Peace, prosperity, and general intelligence are the necessary conditions for the creation of a great national literature — a truth that finds abundant exemplification in the age of Pericles in Athens, of Augustus in Rome, and of Louis XIV. in France. While these conditions do not explain genius,

which must be referred to the immediate agency of the Creator, they make it possible for genius to realize its best capabilities. The reign of Elizabeth, with its increase of intelligence and national power, furnished the occasion and the stimulus under which Spenser, Shakespeare, and Bacon produced their immortal works. At one great bound English literature reached an excellence that for variety of interest and weight of thought has scarcely been surpassed.

The century and a half lying between the death of Chaucer and the accession of Elizabeth was an era of preparation. The potential forces that had called the father of English poetry into being seemed to subside, and not a single writer in either prose or poetry attained to the first or even to the second rank. The cause of this literary barrenness is to be found partly in the repression of free inquiry by the church and Parliament, partly in the social disorders connected with the Wars of the Roses, and partly in the varied and important interests that engaged general attention.

The century preceding the accession of Elizabeth was an era of awakened mind and intellectual acquisition. The revival of learning was an event of vast importance, not only in the intellectual life of England, but also of all Europe. It had its central point in the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453, which caused many Greek scholars to seek refuge in Italy. As ancient learning had already begun to receive attention there, these scholarly fugitives were warmly welcomed. Noble and wealthy patronage was not wanting; and soon the classic literature of Greece and Rome was studied with almost

incredible enthusiasm. The popes received the new learning under their protection; libraries were founded, manuscripts collected, and academies established.

Eager scholars from England, France, and Germany sat at the feet of Italian masters, in order afterward to bear beyond the Alps the precious seed of the new culture. Its beneficent effects soon became apparent. Greek was introduced into the great universities of England. Erasmus, the most brilliant scholar of his time, taught at Oxford. It became the fashion to study the ancient classics, and Elizabeth, Jane Grey, and other noble ladies are said to have been conversant with Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero in the original. The taste, the eloquence, the refined literary culture, of Athens and pagan Rome were restored to the world; and "gradually, by an insensible change, men were raised to the level of the great and healthy minds which had freely handled ideas of all kinds fifteen centuries before."

The remarkable inventions and discoveries of the fifteenth century contributed, in a noteworthy degree, to awaken intellect and lift men to a higher plane of knowledge. The printing-press was invented about the middle of the century, and in less than a decade it was brought to such perfection that the whole Bible appeared in type in 1456. It became a powerful aid in the revival of learning. It at once supplanted the tedious and costly process of copying books by hand, and brought the repositories of learning within reach of the common people.

The printing-press was introduced into England about 1476, by William Caxton, who had learned the art of printing in Bruges. The following year appeared the

"Dictes and Notable Wise Sayings of the Philosophers," which is probably the first book printed in England. Caxton contributed materially to the advancement of English letters. He was himself a translator and editor. He printed no fewer than ninety-nine works, among which are Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," Gower's "Confessio Amantis," and Malory's "Morte d'Arthur," from which Tennyson drew the materials for his "Idyls of the King."

Gunpowder, which had been invented the previous century, came into common use, and wrought a salutary change in the organization of society. It destroyed the military prestige of the knightly order, brought the lower classes into greater prominence, and contributed to the abolition of serfdom. The mariner's compass greatly furthered navigation. Instead of creeping along the shores of the Mediterranean or the Atlantic, seamen boldly ventured upon unknown waters. In 1492 Columbus discovered America; and six years later Vasco da Gama, rounding the Cape of Good Hope, sailed across the Indian Ocean to Calcutta. Voyages of discovery followed in rapid succession, new continents were added to the map, and the general store of knowledge was greatly increased.

The greatest event in history since the advent of Christ is the Reformation of the sixteenth century. It was essentially a religious movement, which sought to correct the errors in doctrine and practice that had crept into the church and long given rise to deep dissatisfaction. In connection with the coöperating influences spoken of in the preceding paragraphs, the Reformation began a new stage in human progress, marking the close of the Middle Ages and the dawn of the modern era. There is scarcely

an important interest that it did not touch. It secured greater purity and spirituality in religion, contributed much to the elevation of the laity and the advancement of woman, confirmed the separation of the secular and the ecclesiastical power, established the right of liberty of conscience, gave an extraordinary impulse to literature and science, and, in a word, promoted all that distinguishes and ennobles our modern civilization. From the time of Spenser and Bacon there has been no great English writer who has not shown, directly or indirectly, the influence of the Protestant Reformation.

When the reformatory movement, which began with Martin Luther in Germany in 1517, extended to England, it found a receptive soil. Traditions of Wycliffe still survived; the new learning was friendly to reform; and men of high civil and ecclesiastical rank had inveighed against existing abuses. Though Henry VIII. at first remained faithful to the Roman Catholic church, and even wrote a book against the German reformer, he afterward, for personal and selfish reasons, withdrew his support, and encouraged the reformatory work of his ministers and of Parliament. In 1534 the Act of Supremacy was passed, by which the king was made the supreme head of the Church of England, and empowered to "repress and amend all such errors and heresies as, by any manner of spiritual jurisdiction, might and ought to be lawfully reformed."

Without attempting to trace the general effects of the Reformation in England — a factor that enters with a moulding influence into all the subsequent history of the country — some of its immediate results upon English lit-

erature are briefly indicated. In 1526 Tyndale published his translation of the New Testament, which was followed soon afterward by other portions of the Bible. Nearly every year, for half a century, saw a new edition issue from the press. Tyndale's translation was made with great ability, and served as the basis of subsequent versions until, in 1611, King James's version, embodying all the excellences of previous efforts, gained general acceptance.

The Scriptures in English were seized upon with great avidity by the common people. The results were far reaching and salutary. The study of the Bible stimulated mental activity; its precepts ennobled character and governed conduct; its language improved the common speech; and its treasures of history and poetry added to the popular intelligence. It gave an impulse to general education; and it became at once, what it has since remained, the occasion of high scholarship and of a considerable body of literature. Latimer, whose vigorous sermons advanced the cause of the Reformation in different parts of England, is a type of the unbroken line of able preachers whose influence since upon the social, moral, and intellectual life of the English people cannot be estimated. Religious services were conducted in English; and in 1549 the "Book of Common Prayer," which has been absorbed into the life of succeeding generations, was published, and its use, to the exclusion of all other forms, prescribed by law.

When Elizabeth ascended the throne in 1558, the fortunes of England were at a low ebb. The people were exasperated by Mary's misgovernment and persecution, and the bitter animosity between Protestants and Catholics was

apparently beyond reconciliation. Humiliated by defeat in France, the country was threatened with invasion. There was neither army nor navy. "If God start not forth to the helm," wrote the Council in an appeal to the country, "we be at the point of greatest misery that can happen to any people, which is to become thrall to a foreign nation." By the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots, to the dauphin of France, Scotland became a new menace. These were some of the difficulties Elizabeth encountered on assuming the sovereignty. In dealing with them she showed extraordinary courage and wisdom; and in a long reign of forty-five years she raised England to the front rank among European nations, and awakened in the English people an aggressive and dauntless spirit.

As a woman, the character of Elizabeth is far from admirable. She was vain, coarse, haughty, vindictive, profane, mendacious. But as a queen, she in large measure justified the esteem in which she has been generally held. She was earnest, prudent, far-seeing, wise, and, above all, unselfishly devoted to the interests of her realm. She surrounded herself with able counsellors; and, as a rule, her administration was characterized by a spirit of moderation. She extinguished the fires of persecution that had been lighted under Mary; and, though exacting outward conformity to the established religion, she made no inquisition into the private opinions of her people.

England gradually became Protestant in spirit and the head of the Protestant movement in Europe. The successive dangers arising from fanatical conspiracies were happily averted. The papal bull of excommunication, which absolved the English people from their allegiance to the

queen, came to nothing; the Jesuit emissaries failed in their attempt to incite a revolt; and finally the combined efforts of the Papacy and of Spain to subdue England and reëstablish Catholicism by force were frustrated by the destruction of the Armada. With these triumphs over foes at home and abroad, England acquired a new self-respect and confidence, and entered upon her career of maritime and commercial preëminence.

In spite of the difficulties and dangers belonging to the earlier years of Elizabeth's reign, the interests of the people were wisely cared for. When coming into conflict with Parliament, the queen gracefully surrendered her despotic tendencies. She abolished monopolies that had abused their privileges and become oppressive. Salutary laws were passed for the employment of the mendicant classes, which the cruel policy of preceding reigns had left as a residuum of discontent and menace to the country.

The condition of the middle class was greatly improved. Better methods of tilling the soil gave a new impetus to agriculture. The growth of manufactures was rapid. Instead of sending her fleeces to Holland, England developed every department of woollen manufacture. The mineral products of the country — iron, coal, tin — were increased. With the wars in the Netherlands, which destroyed for a time the trade of Antwerp and Bruges, London became the commercial centre of Europe. At her wharves were found the gold and sugar of the New World, the cotton of India, and the silk of the East. English vessels made their way everywhere — catching cod at Newfoundland, seeking new trade centres in the Baltic, and extending commerce in the Mediterranean.

This activity in agriculture, manufacture, and commerce brought wealth and comfort. The dwellings were improved. Carpets took the place of rushes; the introduction of chimneys brought the pleasures of the fireside; gloomy castles, built for military strength, gave place to elegant palaces, surrounded by Italian gardens. Grammar schools and colleges were established; and the printing-press, freely used for the promulgation and defence of facts and opinions, advanced the general intelligence. A learned woman herself, Elizabeth lent her influence and that of her court to the cause of letters. While the dungeon and the stake were crushing out intellectual freedom in Italy and Spain; while France was distracted by internal religious dissension; while foreign oppression was destroying the trade of the Netherlands, — England, under the prosperous reign of Elizabeth, was constantly gaining in wealth, intelligence, and power.

These outward conditions could not fail to have an influence upon the thought and feeling of the English nation and to manifest themselves in the literary productions of the time. The proud success achieved by England in the face of great odds naturally aroused a vigorous and dauntless spirit. The Englishman of that day became aggressive, persisted in the face of obstacles, drew back before no dangers, despaired of no success. With the growing prominence of his country, his views became comprehensive and penetrating. He was forced to think with a large horizon. Called upon to deal with large interests, his intellect expanded and his character became weighty; engaged in conducting vast enterprises, he developed great executive powers.

Life became intense and rich in all its relations. No interest, whether social, political, commercial, or religious, escaped attention. The energies of the English people were strung to the highest pitch, and wrought, in some departments, the best results of which the English mind is capable. Bacon took the whole circle of knowledge as his field of inquiry. Spenser's "Faery Queene," with its unexampled richness of imagination, is a fountain from which the poets of succeeding generations have drawn inspiration. And Shakespeare, with his many-sided and inexhaustible intellect, stands easily at the head of the world's great dramatists. With its great achievements, we may well call this the *first creative period* in our literature.

There are a few productions and a few writers prior to the accession of Elizabeth that well deserve mention. It was during the period between Chaucer and the "Virgin Queen" that the most famous of the old English ballads were written. In their simplicity, directness, and often crudeness of style, they possess a charm that a more cultivated age cannot successfully imitate. Not a few of them celebrate the fearless conflicts of the Scottish border and the lawless deeds of bold freebooters. Unwritten songs of the people — of the "good yeomanry" they invoke blessings upon — they were recited by wandering minstrels, and handed down by tradition from generation to generation. In most cases their authors are unknown; and constantly undergoing changes and receiving additions, they may be said, not to have been composed, but to have grown. In them the rude life of the times — the lawlessness, daring, fortitude, passion — is graphically depicted.

Among the best known of these ballads is "Chevy

Chase," which describes with great simplicity and force a battle between Lord Percy of England and Earl Douglas of Scotland. "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas," wrote Sir Philip Sidney in his "Defense of Poesie," "that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet." Of a later version Addison wrote an interesting critique in the *Spectator*. In its oldest form the ballad begins as follows: —

"The Persè owt off Northombarlande,
And a vowe to God mayd he,
That he wold hunte in the mountayns
Off Chyviat within dayes thre,
In the mauger of doughtè Dogles,
And all that ever with him be."

Robin Hood, the bold outlaw of Sherwood forest, is the centre of an interesting group of ballads. For a long time he was the people's ideal hero. Sir Walter Scott called him "the gentlest thief that ever was." But his popularity, surpassing that of any English king of the time, was due, not to his deeds of violence, but to his courage, love of fair play, and open-handed generosity. His sympathies were with the yeomanry; he took the part of the oppressed; he robbed the rich to give to the poor; and though a good Catholic, who would hear three masses every day, he hated the extortions of bishops and monks. There is no rancor in Robin Hood's fighting. He looks upon it as a manly test of strength, and with Saxon honesty disdains to take any unfair advantage. He jokes with his antagonist, and after the fight is over takes him by the hand and receives him into the friendship of frank and fearless men.

"Then Robin took them both by the hands,
And danced round about the oke tree:
'For three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men we be.'"

There is a writer of prose in the pre-Elizabethan period who produced works still possessing considerable interest. Sir Thomas More, who was called in his day the greatest wit in England, was born in 1478. He studied Greek at Oxford under Linacre and Grocyn, enthusiastic devotees of the new learning. For a time he stood in high favor with Henry VIII., served on foreign embassies, became treasurer of the Exchequer, and finally rose to be Lord High Chancellor in place of Wolsey. During the reformatory movement he remained a zealous adherent of the Papacy; and when he refused to recognize the validity of Henry's marriage with Anne Boleyn, and the king's supremacy over the English church, he was cast into the Tower and beheaded in 1535.

More took part in the religious agitation of the time, and wrote several theological treatises, which are not free from coarseness and rancor. His "Life of Edward the Fifth" surpassed in clearness and purity of style any English prose that had preceded it. But the work on which his fame as an author chiefly rests is his "Utopia" — the land of Nowhere — which contributed a new word to our language. What is chimerical or fanciful we now characterize as Utopian. The "Utopia," like Plato's "Republic," which probably furnished the idea, is a description of an ideal commonwealth. It is a satire on the existing state of society, its leading political and social regulations being the reverse of what was then found in Europe. Not a few of

the salutary changes of recent times were anticipated by the genius of More. In an age of religious persecution, which as Lord High Chancellor he had sanctioned, he made it "lawful for every man to favor and follow what religion he would, and that he might do the best he could to bring others to his opinion, so that he did it peaceably, gently, quietly, and soberly, without hasty and contentious rebuking and inveighing against each other."

Among the pre-Elizabethan poets there are two that deserve particular mention. The first of these is Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, whose writings introduced new elements into English poetry. Born of a noble family in 1517, spending his boyhood at Windsor Castle, educated at Oxford, he received the best culture that England could give. He afterward travelled in France and Italy, and in the latter country he familiarized himself with the writings of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. To his other attainments he added military prowess, and in 1542 he distinguished himself by his bravery in the memorable battle of Flodden Field. Two years later he commanded the English army in an expedition against Boulogne, which he captured.

After his return from Scotland, an escapade, which in no way does him credit, resulted in a short imprisonment, which he has rendered noteworthy by a whimsical poem. With two companions he had gone about the streets of London at midnight, indiscriminately breaking windows by means of stone bows. Summoned before the Privy Council, he pleaded guilty, and was sent for a season to Fleet Prison. There he wrote a little "Satire against the Citizens of London," in which he explained that his object

was to warn them of their sins; and since preaching had failed, —

"By unknown means it likèd me
My hidden burthen to express,
Whereby it might appear to thee
That secret sin hath secret spite;
From justice' rod no fault is free,
But that all such as work unright
In most quiet are next ill rest;
In secret silence of the night
This made me with a reckless breast
To wake thy sluggards with my bow."

To Surrey belongs the merit of being the first to introduce blank verse and the sonnet into English poetry, both of which he borrowed from Italy. Nearly all his poems are erotic; and his sonnets have as their general subject the "fair Geraldine," whom he worshipped, it seems, with an unrequited love. The following little poem, on the "Means to Attain Happy Life," shows his style at its best: —

"Martial, the things that do attain
The happy life be these, I find:
The riches left, not got with pain;
The fruitful ground, the quiet mind,

"The equal friend; no grudge, no strife;
No charge of rule, nor governance;
Without disease the healthful life;
The household of continuance;

"The mean diet, no delicate fare;
True wisdom joined with simpleness,
The night discharged of all care,
Where wine the wit may not oppress.

"The faithful wife, without debate;
Such sleeps as may beguile the night;
Contented with thine own estate,
Ne wish for death, ne fear his might."

"An English Petrarch: no juster title," says Taine, "could be given to Surrey, for it expresses his talent as well as his disposition."

Sir Thomas Wyat, an intimate friend of Surrey's, and likewise an ornament of the court of Henry VIII., was born in Kent in 1503. He studied at Cambridge and Oxford, where he took his degree at the early age of fifteen, and afterward travelled extensively on the Continent. He spoke French, Italian, and Spanish; and in addition to his literary attainments he was skilled in all knightly accomplishments. In 1539 he was sent as an ambassador to the court of Charles V. in Spain. Upon his death, in 1542, Surrey wrote an elegy, in which he traced the character of the deceased courtier and poet with a sympathetic hand:—

"A visage stern and mild; where both did grow
Vice to contemn, in virtue to rejoice;
Amid great storms, whom grace assured so,
To live upright, and smile at Fortune's choice."

While sharing with Surrey the honor of introducing the Italian sonnet into English verse, Wyat has the distinction of conforming strictly with his models. All his sonnets, unlike those of his friend, are constructed according to the rules now governing that difficult species of verse. The following extract from a poem, "How to Use the Court," will illustrate the keenness of his satire:—

"Flee therefore truth, it is both wealth and ease;
For though that truth of every man hath praise,
Full near that wind goeth truth in great misease.
Use virtue, as it goeth now-a-days,
In word alone to make thy language sweet,
And of thy deed yet do not as thou says;
Else, be thou sure, thou shalt be far unmeet
To get thy bread, each thing is now so scant."

"In the latter end of the same king (Henry the eight) reigne," says an old writer, "sprong up a new company of courtly makers of whom Sir Thomas Wyat the elder and Henry Earle of Surrey were the two chieftains, who having travailed into Italy, and there tasted the sweete and stately measures and stile of the Italian Poesie, as novices newly crept out of the schools of Dante, Ariosto, and Petrarch, they greatly pollished our rude and homely manner of vulgar Poesie, from that it had bene before, and for that cause may justly be sayd the first reformers of our English meetre and stile."

Coming now to the age of Elizabeth, to which has been given the designation of the First Creative Period, we find that literature suddenly rises in amount and excellence. The forces slowly accumulating for a century quickly burst into blossom. The number of writers, embracing every department of literature, is almost beyond estimate. Translations from the Latin, Greek, and Italian are numerous. It was at this time that Chapman's celebrated version of Homer — "romantic, laborious, Elizabethan" — appeared. Poetry, in almost all its forms, is cultivated with monumental assiduity and success. Theology, as in Foxe's "Book of Martyrs" and Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity," naturally claimed, in this age of religious agitation,

no small share of attention. Education, history, and philosophy, as we shall see, were all treated in noteworthy productions. Stories of travel and adventure, tales of romance, and dramas of every description were all very popular. The writings in these various departments are, for the most part, in a style that far surpasses anything that had preceded them, reflecting a higher order of culture than England had previously enjoyed. It was an age as extraordinary in its literary as in its political activity. Apart from the three great writers — Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare — reserved for special study, there are a few others who, on account of writings of permanent interest, deserve at least brief consideration.

Roger Ascham was educated at Cambridge, where he devoted himself assiduously to the ancient languages. He chose as a motto "*Qui docet discit*, — who teaches learns," — and began to give instruction in Greek as soon as he had learned the elements of that language. In 1537 he was appointed lecturer in Greek and attracted many students, some of whom afterward became distinguished, by his skill and reputation as a teacher. He was fond of archery, and in 1544 wrote a book entitled "Toxophilus," in which he commended the use of the bow as a worthy recreation. In the preface, while apologizing for the use of English, he took occasion to say that the mother-tongue, no less than Latin, might be written with scholarly care. "He that will write well in any tongue," he says, "must follow the counsel of Aristotle, to speak as the common people do; and so should every man understand him, and the judgment of wise men allow him. Many English writers have not done so, but using strange words,

as Latin, French, and Italian, do make all things dark and hard."

In 1548 Ascham was appointed to direct the studies of Lady Elizabeth — a charge he fulfilled for two years. Notwithstanding his Protestant proclivities, he received the appointment of Latin Secretary to Queen Mary, and discharged his duties with so much prudence that he escaped persecution and retained his position after the accession of Elizabeth. He was held in high esteem by the "Virgin Queen," with whom he renewed the classic studies of former days. He disapproved of the harsh discipline then in vogue in education. He set forth his educational views in his "Scholemaster," which is the first noteworthy book in English on the subject of education. It is still worth reading. He laid special stress on gentleness in teaching; and in illustration of its value, he introduced an interesting account of a visit he once paid to Lady Jane Grey. "Before I went into Germany," he says, "I came to Broadgate in Leicestershire, to take my leave of that noble Lady Jane Grey, to whom I was exceeding much beholden. Her parents, the duke and duchess, with all the household, gentle men and gentlewomen, were hunting in the park. I found her in her chamber reading 'Phædon Platonis' in Greek, and that with as much delight as some gentlemen would read a merry tale in Bocace. After salutation and duty done, with some other talk, I asked her why she would lose such pastime in the park? Smiling she answered me: 'I wiss, all their sport in the park is but a shadow to that pleasure I find in Plato. Alas! good folk, they never felt what true pleasure meant.'" This love for literature she ascribed to the gentle skill of her teacher, who led her "with such fair

allurements to learning that she thought all the time nothing whiles she was with him."

John Lyly is the author of a famous work, which introduced a new style of writing into English and added a new word to our language. The term *Euphuism*, denoting an affected elegance of language, points to his principal work which, in the days of Elizabeth, enjoyed great popularity. The Euphuistic style became the fashion at court; and ladies who were not adepts at it were little esteemed in society. While adopting this style himself, he was still able to criticise it in those about him. "It is a world," he says, "to see how Englishmen desire to hear finer speech than the language will allow, to eat finer bread than is made of wheat, to wear finer cloth than is wrought of wool; but I let pass their fineness, which can no way excuse my folly." This overstrained style has been satirized by Sir Walter Scott in his "Monastery"; and a more correct taste has happily abolished it from literature.

Lyly began his literary career in 1579 with the publication of "Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit"; and two years later appeared his "Euphues in England," which, like the preceding work, attained immediate popularity. Euphues is a well-bred young man of Athens, who visits Naples, "a place of more pleasure than profit, and of more profit than piety." Rejecting the wise counsels of a venerable friend, who admonishes him to "serve, love, and fear God," he learns wisdom by bitter experience. At length he returns to Athens, whence he writes letters of admonition to his former companion in ill-doing, who remained in Italy. "Euphues in England" is a favorable account of English life, where the young Athenian found all the women fair,

and all the social arrangements wise. Lyly wrote several plays which were popular; but during the last years of Elizabeth's reign his popularity declined before the rising reputation of greater writers, and in 1606 it was his sad lot to die poor and neglected.

Scarcely any other writer of the Elizabethan era awakens greater interest than Sir Philip Sidney. Of noble birth, he was a distinguished scholar, a brave soldier, a promising statesman, a favored courtier, and a brilliant author in both prose and poetry. His conception of chivalry was "high-erected thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy"; and no other man of his time came nearer embodying in his life and character this lofty ideal.

He was born in Kent in 1554, the oldest child of Sir Henry Sidney and Lady Mary Dudley, sister of Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Leicester. After an Oxford training, in which his remarkable ability became manifest, he travelled on the Continent, visiting the leading cities of Germany and Italy, and making the acquaintance of great scholars and statesmen. Returning to England after three years, he was introduced at court, and won the favor of Elizabeth, who regarded him, as she said, "one of the jewels of her crown." At the great reception given the queen at Kenilworth he distinguished himself in the tournament.

During a period of retirement from court life he wrote his "Arcadia," a heroic romance in prose interspersed with verse in the Italian fashion. It did not appear till after his death. It is a lengthy production, and though it excited enthusiasm in its day, it is now, in spite of frequent beauties, generally regarded tedious. It contains a profu-

sion of startling events, — shipwrecks, abductions, pirates, wicked fairies, and disguised princes, — all described in language that often exhibits great elegance and beauty.

In 1581 Sidney composed his "Defense of Poesie," in reply to the attacks of Puritans, who had stigmatized poets as "caterpillars of the commonwealth." This work, which is still read with interest, shows a clear appreciation of the function of poetry, and presents its arguments with manly clearness and force. There is an absence of affected conceits, and the Euphuists are explicitly condemned. "For now," he says, "they cast sugar and spice upon every dish that is served to the table; like those Indians, not content to wear earrings at the fit and natural place of the ears, but they will thrust jewels through their nose and lips, because they will be sure to be fine." He pronounces the poet "monarch of all sciences. For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way as will entice any man to enter into it."

Sidney's poetical gifts found expression in a series of one hundred and eight sonnets addressed to Penelope Devereux, upon whom he bestowed the poetic name of Stella. The ardent attachment they breathe seems to have been merely Platonic; for at the time the poet was composing them he was engaged to Fanny Walsingham, whom he shortly afterward married. They vary in excellence, striking all the tones from a forced artificiality to a natural simplicity and sweetness.

Strongly Protestant in his feelings, he desired the queen to become the "defendress of the faith," and to place herself at the head of a Protestant league. In 1585, when aid was sent to the Protestants in the Netherlands, who

were struggling against Spanish oppression, Sidney was made governor of Flushing, one of the towns ceded to England. He took part in the investment of Zutphen the following year, and in a gallant attack upon a detachment of Spaniards his thigh was shattered by a musket ball. Carried from the field, mortally wounded, he asked for a cup of water; but as he was raising it to his lips, a dying soldier near him cast upon it a look of intense longing. "Give it to that man," said the magnanimous Sidney; "his necessity is greater than mine."

It is not frequent that religious controversy makes a permanent contribution to literature. In subserving some immediate end, controversial writings are apt to be temporary in their character; and produced under the stress of party spirit, they are often disfigured by partisan feeling. But the great work of Richard Hooker, the "Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity," which is a defence of the Established Church, is an exception; for the first book at least has won a permanent place in our literature. Avoiding the bitter spirit and scurrilous style common in the religious controversies of the time, he endeavored, with great integrity of purpose, to base his defence on fundamental and changeless principles. In spite of certain faults of style and defects of reasoning, his work has remained ever since an authority.

When Pope Clement said that he had never met with an English writer that deserved the name of author, he was referred to the "Ecclesiastical Polity"; and after reading the first book, he felt constrained to say, "There is no learning this man hath not searched into — nothing too hard for his understanding; this man, indeed, deserves

the name of an author; his books will get reverence by age, for there is in them such seeds of eternity that, if the rest be like this, they shall last till the last fire shall consume all learning."

Richard Hooker was born in or near the city of Exeter in 1553, of parents who were noted for virtue and industry. It was said of him in his early school days that he seemed "to be blessed with inward light." He was bred at Oxford, and at the age of twenty-eight took orders in the Established Church, for which he was eminently fitted by his piety and scholarship. He married "a silly clownish woman," who turned out to be a vixen; but he bore his domestic discomfort with admirable resignation. "If saints have usually a double share in the miseries of this life," he said, "I that am none ought not to repine at what my wise Creator has appointed for me, but labor (as indeed I do daily), to submit mine to his will, and possess my soul in patience and peace."

He was drawn unwillingly into the controversies of the time; for, as he said, "God and nature did not intend him for contention, but for study and quietness." The Puritans maintained that the Church of England needed a further reformation; that many of its usages savored too much of Romanism; that the traditions of men imposed no binding obligation in ecclesiastical matters; that the Episcopal form of government should be abolished; and that the Word of God should be the only source, not only of doctrine, but also of church usages and discipline.

In opposition to these declarations, Hooker maintained: (1) that while the Scriptures are a perfect standard of doctrine, they are not a rule of discipline or government.

(2) That the practice of the apostles is not an invariable rule or law to the church in succeeding ages, because they acted according to circumstances in its infantile state. (3) That the Scriptures leave many things indifferent. (4) That the church is a society like others, invested with powers to make what laws it regards necessary or reasonable for its well-being and government, provided they do not interfere with or contradict the laws and commandments of Holy Scripture. And (5) that where the Scripture is silent, human authority may interpose, having recourse to the reason of things and the rights of society.

With these principles established, it was of course easy to defend the particular rites and ceremonies of the Church of England. The following passage, with which the first book of the "Ecclesiastical Polity" closes, has often been quoted, and is indeed a bit of magnificent prose: "Wherefore, that here we may briefly end; of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and their joy."

Soldier, sailor, courtier, statesman, historian, poet — these are the different characters in which Sir Walter Raleigh appears. In that age of great men — when Spenser, Shakespeare, and Bacon were rendering England famous in literature, and Hawkins, Frobisher, and Drake were making her powerful on the sea — the figure of

Raleigh is not dwarfed. In the momentous events of the time, which involved all subsequent history; in the conflicts between Roman supremacy and Protestant independence; in the contest with Spain which was to decide the sovereignty of the seas, and the peopling of the new world, he had, as counsellor of the queen and admiral of the fleet, no insignificant share. His versatility of genius was almost unexampled; and to whatever form of activity he turned his attention, he exhibited efficiency and achieved distinction. His capacious mind was equally at home in devising a comprehensive state policy, in managing practical details, and in cultivating the graces of literature.

Born in 1552, near the city of Exeter in Devonshire, — a county that during the sixteenth century gave England Bishop Jewell, Sir Francis Drake, and Richard Hooker,— he entered Oxford at the age of fourteen and distinguished himself as a rhetorician and philosopher. With strong Protestant feeling, he went to France and fought as a volunteer in the Huguenot armies. In 1578 he joined an expedition sent to the Netherlands to oppose Don John of Austria; and a little later he accompanied his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, on a voyage to America, the purpose of which was to antagonize Spanish interests. In 1580 he went with Lord Grey (whose secretary was Edmund Spenser) to Ireland, which was then in a state of insurrection, and distinguished himself by his energy and courage. At the court in London he won the special favor of Queen Elizabeth, and became one of her principal counsellors. His tact was admirable. He was once attending the queen on a walk; and when, on coming to a muddy

place, she hesitated for a moment, Raleigh instantly spread his rich plush cloak in the way for her feet. He was made in succession Captain of the Guard, Gentleman of the Privy Chamber, Lord Warden of the Stannaries, and Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall.

In the conflict with Spain, Raleigh was of eminent service. When the news reached London that the Armada was advancing, he posted himself, eager for the fray, off the southern coast of England, in order to fly at the flanks of the invading fleet. In council he advocated the tactics by which the Armada was defeated and England saved. In 1589 he made a visit to Ireland and renewed his friendship with Spenser. He brought the author of the "Faery Queene" to London and introduced him at court — a service acknowledged in a poem entitled "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," in which Raleigh figures as the "Shepherd of the Ocean."

Of Raleigh's varied other services as naval commander and explorer, there is not space to speak. With the death of Elizabeth in 1603 his fortunes began to decline. He incurred the displeasure of James I. First deprived of his offices, he was finally imprisoned on a charge of conspiracy. In spite of his innocence, eloquent defence, and admirable bearing, he was adjudged guilty and sentenced to death. The king did not venture to execute the sentence; and after being brought on the scaffold, Raleigh was reprieved and led back to the Tower. He employed the thirteen tedious years of his imprisonment in study, and in 1614 he published his "History of the World." It is an unfinished work, coming down only to the year 170 B.C. As a record of facts, it has long since been super-

seded; but it still possesses interest as the best specimen of historical prose that had yet appeared in England. Raleigh's large experience and practical sense preserved him from pedantry, while his reflections are often striking and sometimes eloquent. "O eloquent, just, and mighty death!" he exclaims, "whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-fetched greatness, all the pride, cruelty, and ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *hic jacet!*"

Apart from numerous prose writings — epistolary, maritime, geographical, political, and historical — Raleigh felt the impulse of poetry. He contemplated an English epic; but his busy life left him leisure for only a few miscellaneous pieces, in which depth of sentiment is associated with felicitous expression. His reply to Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd" is well known: —

> "If all the world and love were young,
> And truth in every shepherd's tongue,
> These pretty pleasures might me move
> To live with thee and be thy love."

The man of deeds rather than of words is portrayed in the following lines: —

> "Passions are likened best to floods and streams;
> The shallow murmur, but the deep are dumb;
> So, when affections yield discourse, it seems
> The bottom is but shallow whence they come.
> They that are rich in words, in words discover
> That they are poor in that which makes a lover."

The lines he wrote the night before his execution possess a melancholy interest: —

> "Even such is time, that takes in trust
> Our youth, our joys, our all we have,
> And pays us but with earth and dust;
> Who, in the dark and silent grave,
> When we have wandered all our ways,
> Shuts up the story of our days;
> But from this earth, this grave, this dust,
> My God shall raise me up, I trust."

The poetic activity of the First Creative Period is astonishing. The list of poets contains no fewer than two hundred names, and many of them were prolific writers. The poetry of this time exhibits all the exuberant vigor of youth, and often also, as might be expected, a youthful immaturity. The choice of subjects is frequently unhappy, and naturalness of style is often supplanted by pedantic affectations. Except in the case of a few master-spirits, the wine of poetry had not yet had time to run clear.

Apart from the drama, the lyrical productions are by far the most successful, and some of them are admirable in form and spirit, comparing favorably with the efforts of a later day. The Elizabethan lyric originated, not among the people, but largely among the cultured circles of the court. The poets of this period were not inaptly styled "courtly makers." The subjects are generally erotic, and the treatment prevailingly objective. What appeals to the senses, rather than to the reflective powers, is made prominent. The lyrical measures are exceedingly varied, though the basis is almost always iambic. The influences pro-

ducing this rich variety were threefold: (1) the old national metre with its assonance and alliteration; (2) the metrical forms of France and Italy, which were extensively imitated; and (3) the classical metres, which were studied with enthusiasm.

There are several lengthy poems — Sackville's "Mirror for Magistrates," Warner's "Albion's England," Daniel's "Civil Wars," and Drayton's "Polyolbion" — which can not be spoken of so favorably. They are indeed models of patient authorship, and exhibit great skill in mechanical verse-making; but they have, as a rule, the serious defect of being unreadable. Nothing but the most ardent patriotism can find them interesting. Most persons, after looking into these poems, will discover some basis for the humorous criticism of Lowell, who speaks of this age as "the period of the saurians in English poetry, interminable poems, book after book and canto after canto, like far reaching *vertebræ* that at first sight would seem to have rendered earth unfit for the habitation of man. They most of them sleep well now, as once they made their readers sleep, and their huge remains lie embedded in the deep morasses of Chambers and Anderson. We wonder at the length of face and general atrabilious look that mark the portraits of the men of that generation, but it is no marvel when even their relaxations were such downright hard work. Fathers, when their day on earth was up, must have folded down the leaf and left the task to be finished by their sons — a dreary inheritance."

When the Christian church gained the ascendency in ancient Rome, it set itself in opposition to dramatic representations, which at that time were characterized by lewd-

ness and brutality. Tertullian said that "stage plays are the pomp of the devil;" and Clement of Rome and Augustine denounced the theatre in terms equally sweeping and strong. Under this opposition of the church, the dramas of Greece and Rome fell into oblivion, except where outcast and wandering actors preserved some faint tradition of them.

The modern drama has an ecclesiastical origin. Its beginnings are found in the Miracle plays, which, during the latter part of the Middle Ages, were common not only in England, but throughout all Europe. These plays, sometimes called Mysteries, represented scenes in sacred history and in the lives of saints. They were written by ecclesiastics, and performed under the auspices of the church, in abbeys and cathedrals. At a time when preaching was unusual, they were employed to instruct the people in the historical portions of the Scripture. Subsequently, they were performed by trading companies in the towns, who used movable platforms called pageants. In spite of their religious origin and aim, these plays often degenerated into gross irreverence and buffoonery; and at their best, judged by present standards, they were crude in form and style.

The Miracle plays were succeeded by the Moralities, which introduced as *dramatis personæ* the leading virtues and vices. They satisfied a popular love of allegory, and retained a hold on the public mind till the time of Elizabeth. One of the last dramatic representations attended by the queen was a Morality, entitled the "Contention between Liberality and Prodigality," and performed in the year 1600. Sometimes, along with the virtues and vices,

characters from real life were introduced; and by thus touching upon current events and existing manners, the Morality gained an additional element of popularity. A further approach to the modern drama was made by the Interludes, a sort of farcical representation invented by John Heywood early in the sixteenth century, and designed to relieve the tediousness of the Miracle play or Morality.

The first English comedy was "Ralph Royster Doyster," written by Nicholas Udall, headmaster of Eton and translator of Terence. The exact date of its composition is not known, but it appeared prior to 1551. Unlike the Miracle and Moral plays, it is divided into acts and scenes — an advance in dramatic form suggested by classical models. The first regular tragedy, entitled "Gorboduc," followed a few years later. It was written by Thomas Sackville, and performed before the queen in 1562. It exhibits the first application of blank verse to dramatic composition in England. Like the comedy just spoken of, its form was affected by Greek and Roman models, with which Sackville had become acquainted at Oxford and Cambridge. It is chiefly notable as introducing the splendid theatrical outburst of the Elizabethan era. Before the close of the sixteenth century there appeared a large number of dramatists, whose works possess not simply historical interest, but also intrinsic excellence. Among the predecessors of Shakespeare were Kyd, Lyly, Peele, Greene, and Marlowe.

Special buildings for dramatic entertainments were not erected till late in the sixteenth century. Before that time the plays were acted in tents, wooden sheds, courtyards of inns, and cock-pits — the name pit, applied to the lowest

place in theatres, still suggesting this association. The first building in London for dramatic purposes was erected in 1576. It was speedily followed by others; and before the close of the century eleven theatres were built, chiefly on the southern or Surrey bank of the Thames, in order to be beyond the jurisdiction of the Puritan city government. The most famous of these theatres, because of its association with Shakespeare, was The Globe, so called from its sign, which represented Atlas supporting the world, with the striking motto, "*Totus mundus agit histrionem.*"

These early theatres were all built after the same model, suggested, no doubt, by the enclosed courts of inns. A central platform served for the stage, which was surrounded by seats except on one side reserved for a dressing room. The upper galleries, which extended around the entire building, were occupied by boxes. This arrangement generally led to the adoption of octagonal-shaped buildings. Most of the theatres were uncovered, except immediately over the stage. There was no movable scenery, and the female parts were acted by men and boys. A placard, bearing the name of Rome, Paris, or London, as the case might be, indicated the scene of the action. The plays began in the forenoon, and were attended by people of every social condition. In spite of the opposition of the Puritan corporation of London, the drama made rapid progress; and in one generation it passed from infancy to full maturity, exhibiting a compass, strength, and majesty unparalleled in the literary history of any other country.

Twenty-five years after the construction of the first theatre, the "Merchant of Venice," "Romeo and Juliet," and "Hamlet" were presented on the stage. A large

number of dramatic poets in London — Greene, Marlowe, Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger, and others — were engaged in supplying the popular demand for plays; and such was the genius of several of these writers that they would stand out with prominence but for the overshadowing figure of one consummate master. In the main, they were men of liberal culture; but frequently their strength was wasted in licentious and intemperate living. Many of them were actors, and began their literary careers by retouching the plays of others. As the price of a drama was only from seven to twenty pounds, they were often in want of bread; and it is a curious fact that many of the details we have of their lives are taken from the journal of a pawn-broker and money-lender.

Among the minor dramatists there is one that seems to deserve more particular mention. In the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey a slab bears the simple inscription, "O Rare Ben Jonson." Though two and a half centuries have passed since it was carved there, the literary world, with remarkable unanimity, has approved it as just. He was a strong, learned, large-minded, and big-hearted piece of manhood — John Bull personified, as Whipple suggests.

Ben Jonson was born in London in 1573. After a brief course at Cambridge, he became a soldier in the Netherlands, where he distinguished himself by his bravery. But military life had little charm for him, and after a single campaign he returned to London and connected himself with a theatre. As an actor he failed completely. But as a dramatic author he was more fortunate, and in 1596 his

comedy, "Every Man in his Humor," in which Shakespeare acted a part, established his reputation. It was about this time that the acquaintance between the two dramatists began. We have a pleasing contemporary picture of them as they met, along with Beaumont, Fletcher, and other poets, at the Falcon Tavern, the home of the Mermaid Club founded by Raleigh. "Many were the wit combats," says Fuller, "betwixt Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war; Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

After the success of "Every Man in his Humor," Jonson wrote, at pretty regular intervals, a series of dramas, several of which — "Volpone," "The Silent Woman," and "The Alchemist" — occupy a high rank in dramatic literature. But he was a lyrical as well as dramatic poet. It has even been contended that lyrical poetry was his special sphere. However that may be, he undoubtedly possessed lyrical gifts of a high order, as may be seen in the following well-known song: —

"Drink to me only with thine eyes,
And I will pledge with mine;
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,
And I'll not look for wine.
The thirst that from the soul doth rise
Doth ask a drink divine;
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,
I would not change for thine.

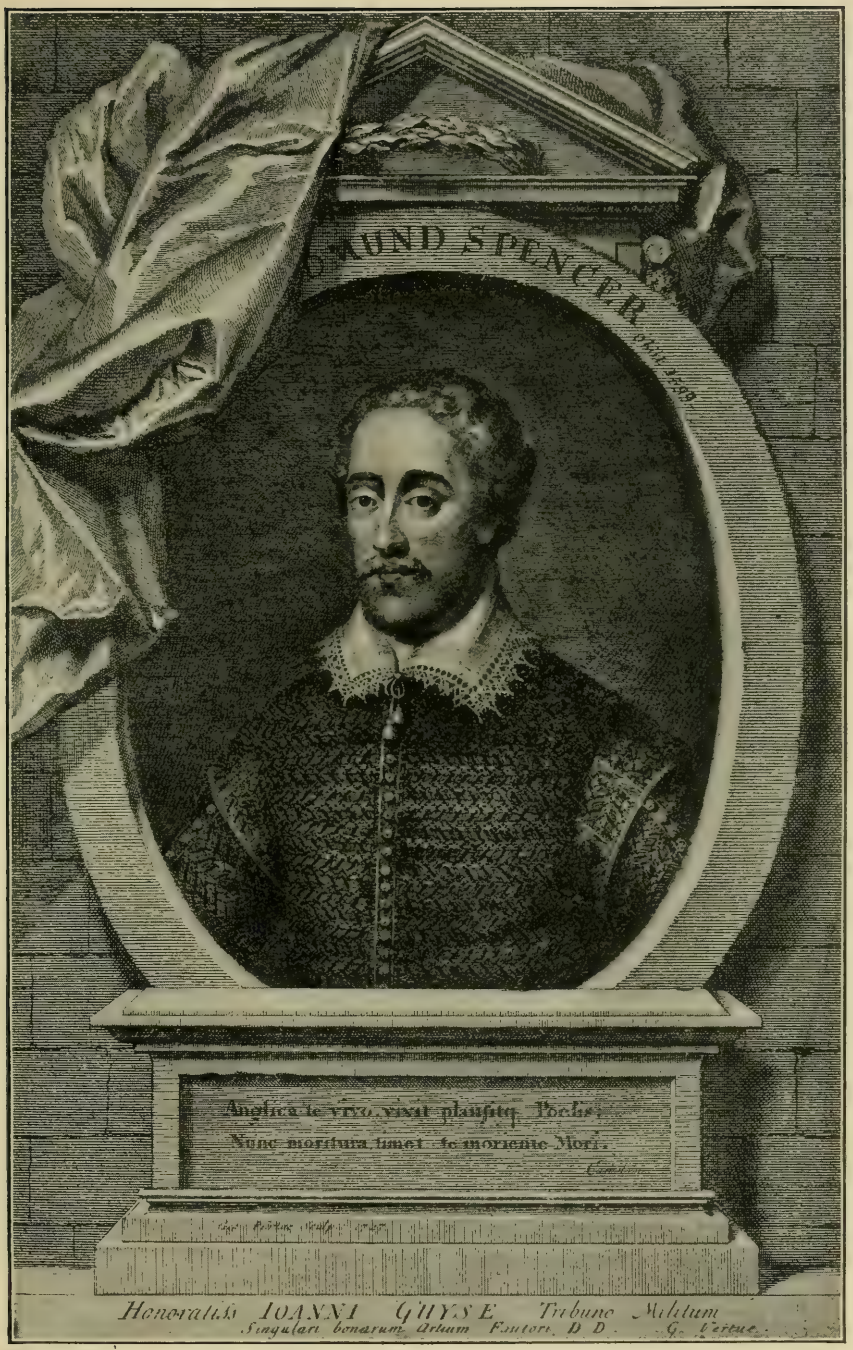
"I sent thee late a rosy wreath,
Not so much honoring thee
As giving it a hope that there
It could not withered be;
But thou thereon didst only breathe
And sent'st it back to me;
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,
Not of itself, but thee."

EDMUND SPENSER.

For more than one hundred and fifty years no poet worthy to bear the mantle of Chaucer had appeared in England. But, as we have seen, mighty movements had been going on in Europe, — the revival of letters, great inventions and discoveries, and the widespread religious movement known as the Reformation. It was an age of great thoughts and aspirations and of marvellous achievement. The time had at length come, under the prosperous and illustrious reign of Elizabeth, for English greatness to mirror itself in literature. A group of great writers arose. To Edmund Spenser belongs the honor of having been the first genius to reflect the greatness of his age and country in an imperishable poem, and to add new lustre to a splendid period in English history.

As with Chaucer, we have to lament the meagreness of detail connected with the life of Spenser. The year 1552, which is determined by an incidental and not wholly conclusive reference in one of his sonnets, is commonly accepted as the year of his birth. The place of his birth, not otherwise known, is likewise determined by a passage in his "Prothalamion," a poem written near the close of his life: —

> "At length they all to merry London came,
> To merry London, my most kindly nurse,
> That to me gave this life's first native source,
> Though from another place I take my name,
> An house of ancient fame."



Engraved by G. Vertue, 1727.

Nothing is known of his parents; but, as he was a charity student, it is to be inferred that they were in humble circumstances. He received his preparatory training at the Merchant Taylor School, and at the age of seventeen entered Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, where he earned his board by acting as sizar or waiter. He took the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1572, and that of Master of Arts four years later. The particulars of his life at Cambridge are, for the most part, matters of mere conjecture. We may safely infer from his broad scholarship that he was a diligent student. His writings show an intimate acquaintance, not only with classical antiquity, but also with the great writers — Chaucer, Dante, Tasso, Ariosto, Marot — of the dawning modern era.

A friendship with Gabriel Harvey, a fellow of Pembroke Hall, and an enthusiastic writer and educator, was not without influence upon his poetical career. Harvey encouraged Spenser in his early literary efforts; but it is fortunate that his advice failed to turn the poet's genius to the drama. After leaving the university, Spenser spent a year or two in the north of England (it is impossible to be more definite), where he wrote his first important work, "The Shepherd's Calendar." It was inspired by a deep but unfortunate affection for a country lass, who appears in the poem under the anagrammatic name of Rosalinde. Her identity, a puzzle to critics, remained for a long time undetermined; but an American writer, with great ingenuity, has shown almost beyond question that the young lady was Rose Daniel, sister to the poet of that name.[1]

The poem consists of twelve eclogues, named after the

[1] See *Atlantic Monthly*, November, 1858.

months of the year. It contains a variety of measures, all of which are distinguished for their harmony. Nothing so admirable in metre and phrase had appeared since Chaucer. Many archaic words were introduced under the impression, as we are told in a prefatory epistle addressed to Harvey, "that they bring great grace, and, as one would say, authority to the verse." Though less finished than some subsequent poems, "The Shepherd's Calendar" showed a master's touch and announced the presence of a great poet in England.

Upon the advice of Harvey, Spenser went to London. He met Sir Philip Sidney, by whom he was introduced at court, and put in the way of preferment. He fell in readily with court life, wore a pointed beard and fashionable mustache, and acquired a light tone in speaking of women — a levity that soon gave place to a truly chivalrous regard. In 1580 he was appointed secretary to Lord Grey, deputy to Ireland, and accompanied that official through the bloody scenes connected with the suppression of Desmond's rebellion. The duties assigned him were ably performed; and, in recognition of his services, he received in 1586, as a grant, Kilcolman Castle and three thousand acres of land in the county of Cork. Here he afterward made his home, occasionally visiting London to seek preferment or to publish some new work. Though his home was not without the attraction of beautiful surroundings, he looked upon his life there as a sort of banishment. In one of his poems he speaks of —

> "My luckless lot,
> That banisht had myself, like wight forlore,
> Into that waste, where I was quite forgot."

But however disagreeable to the feelings of Spenser, who continued to feel a longing for the "sweet civilities" of London, it can hardly be doubted that his experience in Ireland was favorable to the development of his poetic gifts, and found a favorable reflection in his greatest poem. It gave a vivid realism to his descriptions that in all probability would otherwise have been wanting.

In 1589 he was visited by Sir Walter Raleigh, to whom he read the first three books of the "Faery Queene." Seated in the midst of an attractive landscape, the poet and the hero make a pleasing picture as they discuss the merits of a work that is to begin a new era in English literature. Raleigh was so delighted with the poem that he urged the author to take it to London — advice that was eagerly followed. The poet was granted an audience by Elizabeth, and favored with the patronage of several noble ladies; but further than a pension of fifty pounds, which does not appear to have been regularly paid, he received no substantial recognition.

This result was a disappointment to Spenser, who had hoped that his literary fame would lead to higher political preferment. In "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," a poem in which the incidents of this visit are embodied, he speaks of the court in a tone of disappointment and bitterness. In a prefatory letter addressed to Raleigh, who figures in the poem under the title of "Shepherd of the Ocean," Spenser says that the work agrees "with the truth in circumstance and matter"; and from this declaration it may be inferred that his portrayal of court life was drawn, not from imagination, but from experience.

"For, sooth to say, it is no sort of life
For shepherd fit to lead in that same place,
Where each one seeks with malice, and with strife,
To thrust down other in foul disgrace,
Himself to raise: and he doth soonest rise
That best can handle his deceitful wit
In subtle shifts. . . .
To which him needs a guileful, hollow heart
Masked with fair dissembling courtesy,
A filed tongue furnisht with terms of art,
No art of school, but courtiers' schoolery.
For arts of school have there small countenance,
Counted but toys to busy idle brains,
And there professors find small maintenance,
But to be instruments of others' gains,
Nor is there place for any gentle wit
Unless to please it can itself apply."

In "Mother Hubbard's Tale," which exhibits Spenser's genius in satire, and is the most interesting of his minor pieces, he has spoken of the court in some vigorous lines. This poem was published in 1591; and though composed, as the author tells us, "in the raw conceit of youth," it shows the touch of his mature years. No doubt it expresses his own bitter experience: —

"Full little knowest thou that hast not tried
What hell it is in suing long to abide;
To lose good days that might be better spent;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent;
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
To have thy prince's grace, yet want her peers';
To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares;
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs;

To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.
Unhappy wight, born to disastrous end,
That doth his life in so long tendance spend!"

The first three books of the "Faery Queene" were published in 1590, and were received with an outburst of applause. Spenser took rank as the first of living poets. "The admiration of this great poem," says Hallam, "was unanimous and enthusiastic. No academy had been trained to carp at his genius with minute cavilling; no recent popularity, no traditional fame (for Chaucer was rather venerated than much in the hands of the reader) interfered with the immediate recognition of his supremacy. The 'Faery Queene' became at once the delight of every accomplished gentleman, the model of every poet, and the solace of every scholar." Spenser remained in London about a year in the enjoyment of his newly won reputation and in the pursuit of preferment. But in the latter he was disappointed, and returned to Ireland, as we have seen, with a feeling of resentment toward the manners and morals of the court.

In 1594 he married a lady by the name of Elizabeth — her family name remaining uncertain. In his "Amoretti, or Sonnets," he describes the beginning and progress of his affection. These sonnets are interesting, not only for their purity and delicacy of feeling, but also for the light they throw on the poet's life. Whatever may have been the real character of the Irish maiden he celebrates, in the poems she is idealized into great beauty. It was only after a protracted suit that the poet met with encouragement and was able to say, —

"After long storms' and tempests' sad assay,
Which hardly I endured heretofore,
In dread of death, and dangerous dismay,
With which my silly bark was tossed sore;
I do at length descry the happy shore,
In which I hope ere long for to arrive:
Fair soil it seems from far, and fraught with store
Of all that dear and dainty is alive.
Most happy he! that can at last atchyve
The joyous safety of so sweet a rest;
Whose least delight sufficeth to deprive
Remembrance of all pains which him opprest.
All pains are nothing in respect of this;
All sorrows short that gain eternal bliss."

The marriage, which took place in 1594, was celebrated in an "Epithalamion," which ranks as the noblest bridal song ever written.

In 1596 Spenser wrote his "View of the State of Ireland," which shows, not the poet's hand, but that of a man of affairs. It is rigorous in policy and inexorable in spirit. He sees but one side of the subject. After an elaborate review of the history, character, and institutions of the Irish, which are pronounced full of "evil usages," he lays down his plan of pacification. Garrison Ireland with an adequate force of infantry and cavalry; give the Irish twenty days to submit; and after that time, hunt down the rebels like wild beasts. "If they be well followed one winter, ye shall have little work to do with them the next summer." Famine would complete the work of the sword; and in less than two years, Spenser thought, the country would be peaceful and open to English colonists. Submission or extermination — this was

the simple solution of the Irish problem he proposed. "Bloody and cruel" he recognized it to be; but holding the utter subjugation of Ireland necessary to the preservation of English power and the Protestant religion, he would not draw back "for the sight of any such rueful object as must thereupon follow."

In 1598 Spenser was appointed sheriff of Cork; and Tyrone's rebellion breaking out soon afterward, Kilcolman Castle was sacked and burned. The poet and his wife escaped with difficulty, and it is probable that their youngest child, who was left behind, perished in the flames. In 1599 Spenser, overcome by misfortunes, died in a common London inn, and was buried in Westminster Abbey, near the tomb of his master, Chaucer. His life was full of disappointment. He never obtained the preferment to which he aspired, and he felt his failure with all the keenness of sensitive genius. And yet, under different and happier circumstances, his great natural gifts would probably not have borne so rich fruitage.

All that we know of Spenser is of good report. He had the esteem and friendship of the best people of his time; he was faithful in his attachments and irreproachable in his outward life. In his comparative seclusion he was able to forget the hard realities of his lot and to dwell much of the time in an ideal world; and the poetic creations, which he elaborated in the quietude of Kilcolman Castle, had the good fortune to gain immediate and hearty recognition. He has been aptly styled "the poet's poet"; and it is certain that his writings, especially the "Faery Queene," have been a perennial source of inspiration and power to his successors. Pope read him in his

old age with the same zest as in his youth. Dryden looked up to him as a master; and Milton called him "our sage and serious poet, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas."

As already stated, the first three books of the "Faery Queene" were published in 1590. Three more books appeared in 1596 — an interval that indicates the conscientious labor Spenser bestowed upon his productions. The plan of the work contemplated no fewer than twelve books; but in its present incomplete state it is one of the longest poems in the language. There is a tradition that three unpublished books were burned in the destruction of Kilcolman Castle, but it is probably without foundation. The "Faery Queene" is Spenser's masterpiece. Keenly sympathizing with all the great interests and movements of his time, he embodied in this work his noblest thoughts and feelings. Here his genius had full play and attained the highest results of which it was capable. In this poem the Elizabethan Age is reflected in all its splendor.

The stanza of the poem was the poet's own invention and properly bears his name. It is singularly melodious and effective, and has since been made the medium of some of the finest poetry in our language, — Burns's "Cotter's Saturday Night," Shelley's "Revolt of Islam," Byron's "Childe Harold," and many other poems. Though somewhat difficult in its structure, Spenser handled it with masterly ease and skill, and poured forth his treasures of description, narration, reflection, feeling, and fancy, without embarrassment. A single stanza, descriptive of morning, must suffice by way of illustration: —

"By this the northerne wagoner had set
His sevenfold teme behind the stedfast starre
That was in ocean waves yet never wet,
But firme is fixt, and sendeth light from farre
To al that in the wide deepe wandring arre;
And chearefull chaunticlere with his note shrill
Had warned once, that Phœbus fiery carre
In hast was climbing up the easterne hill,
Full envious that night so long his roome did fill."

The poem is itself an allegory, a form that the poet took some pains to justify. In a prefatory letter addressed to Raleigh, the author fully explains his plan and makes clear what would otherwise have remained obscure. "The generall end, therefore, of all the booke," he says, "is to fashion a gentleman or noble person in vertuous and gentle discipline. Which for that I conceived shoulde be most plausible and pleasing, beeing coloured with an historicall fiction, the which the most part of men delight to read, rather for varietie of matter than for profit of the ensample: I chose the historie of King Arthure, as most fit for the excellencie of his person, beeing made famous by many men's former works, and also furthest from the danger of envie, and suspicion of present time." Prince Arthur is the central figure of the poem, in whose person, Spenser says, "I sette forth magnificence in particular, which vertue, for that (according to Aristotle and the rest) is the perfection of all the rest and containeth in it them all, therefore in the whole course I mention the deeds of Arthure appliable to that vertue, which I write of in that booke."

By *magnificence* Spenser meant *magnanimity*, which, according to Aristotle, contains all the moral virtues. Twelve

other knights are made the representatives or patrons of so many separate virtues. The Knight of the Red Cross represents *holiness;* Sir Guyon, *temperance;* Britomartis, a lady knight, *chastity;* and so on. But the allegory is double. In addition to the abstract moral virtues, the leading characters represent contemporary persons. The Faery Queene stands for the glory of God in general, and for Queen Elizabeth in particular; Arthur for *magnanimity*, and also for the Earl of Leicester; the Red Cross Knight for *holiness*, and also for the model Englishman; Una for *truth*, and also for the Protestant church; Duessa for *falsehood*, and also for the Roman church, etc. But in this second part of the allegory a close resemblance is not to be expected, as flattery often guides the poet's pen or warps his judgment. While an acquaintance with the allegory is necessary for a complete understanding of the poem, it adds perhaps but little to the interest of perusal. The poem possesses an intrinsic interest as a narrative of adventure; and our sympathy with the actual personages moving before us causes us to lose sight of their typical character.

The "Faery Queene," it must be confessed, is defective in construction. Spenser intended to follow the maxim of Horace and the example of Homer and Virgil by plunging into the midst of his story; but he failed in his purpose, and a prose introduction, in the shape of a letter to Raleigh, became necessary to understand the poem. "The methode of a poet historicall is not such as of an historiographer. For an historiographer discourseth of affaires orderly as they were done, accounting as well the times as the actions; but a poet thrusteth into the middest, even where it

most concerneth him, and there recoursing to the things forepast, and divining of things to come, maketh a pleasing analysis of all. The beginning, therefore, of my historie, if it were to be told by an historiographer, should be the twelfth booke, which is the last; where I devise that the Faery Queene kept her annuall feast twelve daies; upon which twelve severall dayes, the occasions of the twelve severall adventures hapned, which being undertaken by xii. severall knights, are in these twelve books severally handled and discoursed."

The first book is the most interesting of all. In the letter already quoted, it is explained as follows: "In the beginning of the feast there presented him selfe a tall, clownish younge man, who falling before the Queene of Faeries desired a boone (as the manner then was) which during that feast she might not refuse; which was that hee might have the atchievement of any adventure, which during that feast should happen; that being granted, he rested him selfe on the floore, unfit through his rusticitie for a better place. Soone after entred a faire ladie in mourning weedes, riding on a white asse, with a dwarfe behind her leading a warlike steed, that bore the armes of a knight, and his speare in the dwarfe's hand. She falling before the Queene of Faeries, complayned that her father and mother, an ancient king and queene, had bene by an huge dragon many yeers shut up in a brazen castle, who thence suffered them not to issew: and therefore besought the Faery Queene to assigne her some one of her knights to take on him that exployt. Presently that clownish person upstarting, desired that adventure; whereat the Queene much wondering, and the lady much

gain-saying, yet he earnestly importuned his desire. In the end the lady told him that unlesse that armour which she brought would serve him (that is the armour of a Christian man specified by Saint Paul, v. Ephes.) that he could not succeed in that enterprise, which being forthwith put upon him with due furnitures thereunto, he seemed the goodliest man in al that company, and was well liked of the lady. And eftesoones taking on him knighthood, and mounting on that strange courser, he went forth with her on that adventure: where beginneth the first booke, viz., —

"'A gentle knight was pricking on the plaine,' etc."

The allegory of the "Faery Queene" is nowhere more worthy of study than in the first book. Like Bunyan's pilgrim, the Red Cross Knight shows the conflicts of the human soul in its effort to attain to holiness. This is the sublimest of all conflicts. The knight, clad in Christian armor, set forth to make war upon the dragon, the Old Serpent. After a time the light of heaven is shut out by clouds, and the warrior loses his way in the "wandering wood," the haunt of Error.

"For light she hated as the deadly bale,
Ay wont in desert darkness to remaine,
Where plain none might her see, nor she see any plain."

Only after a long and bitter struggle, typifying the conflicts of the earnest soul in search of truth, does the Knight succeed in vanquishing this dangerous foe. This danger passed, another follows. The hero, with his fair companion, at length encounters —

"An aged sire, in long blacke weedes yclad,
His feet all bare, his beard all hoarie gray,
And by his belt his booke he hanging had;
Sober he seemde, and very sagely sad,
And to the ground his eyes were lowly bent,
Simple in shew, and voide of malice bad,
And all the way he prayed, as he went,
And often knockt his breast, as one that did repent."

This was Archimago or Hypocrisy, who deceives the Knight with his magic art. Truth is made to seem falsehood, and falsehood truth. This deception is the cause of all his subsequent trouble, — his struggle with Sans Foy or Infidelity, his companionship with Duessa or Falsehood, his sojourn and trials at the palace of Pride, and his capture and imprisonment by the giant Orgoglio or Antichrist. He is finally delivered by Arthur, and conducted by Una to the house of Holiness, where he is taught repentance. Spiritual discipline frees him from all his stains, and sends him forth once more protected with his celestial armor. He meets the grim Dragon, and after a prolonged conflict gloriously triumphs. The book naturally ends with his betrothal to Una or Truth, emblematic of eternal union. Through trials and suffering to final victory and truth — this is the history of every earnest soul; and never before was it portrayed with such magnificent imagery and in such melodious language.

As will be readily comprehended, a striking feature of the poem is its unlikeness to actual life. In no small degree it appears artificial and unreal. The personages are somewhat shadowy. A large part of the incident and sentiment belongs to an ideal age of chivalry. All this is apt

to affect the realistic or prosaic reader unpleasantly. But the poem should be approached in the spirit with which it was written. Instead of stopping to criticise the ideas, fashions, and superstitions of the Middle Ages, we should surrender ourselves into the magician's hands, and follow him submissively and sympathetically through the ideal realms into which he leads us. The poem then becomes, in the words of Lowell, "the land of pure heart's ease, where no ache or sorrow of spirit can come."

Spenser was surpassingly rich in imagination — that faculty without which no great poem is possible. He possessed an extraordinary power for appreciating and portraying beauty. His mind was extremely capacious; and, gathering all the literary treasures of the past, whether mediæval, classic, or Christian, he gave them new and fadeless forms. His invention was almost inexhaustible. His facility in description sometimes betrayed him into tedious excess. In his fondness for details, he occasionally wrote passages that are simply nauseating. His style lacks the classic qualities of brevity, force, and self-restraint. But we shall nowhere else find a more flowing and melodious verse, an atmosphere of finer sentiment, and a larger movement or richer coloring. He may be fairly styled the Rubens of English poetry. Every canto of the "Faery Queene" presents passages in which thought, diction, and melody are combined in exquisite harmony.



Houbraken.

Sr Bacon

FRANCIS BACON.

In this era of great writers the name of Francis Bacon, after those of Shakespeare and Spenser, stands easily first. He was great as a lawyer, as a statesman, as a philosopher, as an author — great in everything, alas! but character. Though his position in philosophy is still a matter of dispute, there can be little doubt that he deserves to rank with Plato and Aristotle, who for two thousand years ruled the philosophic world.

It is claimed by some critics that Bacon's method of philosophizing is wanting in either novelty or value, and that no investigator follows his rules. There is much truth in this claim, and yet Bacon's influence in modern science is preëminent. That which has counted for most in his philosophical writings is his spirit. In proud recognition of modern ability and modern advantages, he threw off the tyranny of the ancients. "It would indeed be dishonorable," he says, "to mankind if the regions of the material globe, the earth, the sea, the stars, should be so prodigiously developed and illustrated in our age, and yet the boundaries of the intellectual globe should be confined to the narrow discoveries of the ancients."

He looked upon knowledge, not as an end in itself, to be enjoyed as a luxury, but as a means of usefulness in the service of men. The mission of philosophy is to ameliorate man's condition, — to increase his power, to multiply his enjoyments, and to alleviate his sufferings. He dis-

carded the speculative philosophy which seeks to build up a system from the inner resources of the mind. However admirable in logical acuteness and consistency, such systems are apt to be without truth or utility. "The wit and mind of man," says Bacon, "if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff and is limited thereby; but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work, but of no substance or profit."

He constantly urged an investigation of nature, whereby philosophy might be planted on a solid foundation and receive continual accretions of truth. *Investigation, experiment, verification* — these are characteristic features of the Baconian philosophy and the powerful instruments with which modern science has achieved its marvellous results.

Francis Bacon was born in London, Jan. 22, 1561. His father, Sir Nicholas Bacon, was a man full of wit and wisdom, comprehensive in intellect, retentive to a remarkable degree in memory, and so dignified in appearance and bearing that Queen Elizabeth was accustomed to say, "My Lord Keeper's soul is well lodged." His mother was no less remarkable as a woman. She was the daughter of Sir Anthony Cooke, tutor to King Edward VI., from whom she received a careful education. She was distinguished not only for her womanly and conjugal virtues, but also for her learning, having translated a work from Italian and another from Latin.

Thus Bacon was fortunate in his parents, whose intel-

lectual superiority he inherited, and also in the time of his birth, "when," as he says, "learning had made her third circuit; when the art of printing gave books with a liberal hand to men of all fortunes; when the nation had emerged from the dark superstitions of popery; when peace throughout all Europe permitted the enjoyment of foreign travel and free ingress to foreign scholars; and, above all, when a sovereign of the highest intellectual attainments, at the same time that she encouraged learning and learned men, gave an impulse to the arts and a chivalric and refined tone to the manners of the people."

He was delicate in constitution, but extraordinary in intellectual power. Son of a Lord Keeper, a nephew of a Secretary of State, he was brought up in surroundings that were highly favorable to intellectual culture and elegant manners. His youthful precocity attracted attention. Queen Elizabeth, delighted with his childish wisdom and gravity, playfully called him her "Young Lord Keeper." When she asked him one day how old he was, with a delicate courtesy beyond his years, he replied, "Two years younger than your majesty's happy reign." His disposition was reflective and serious; and it is related of him that he stole away from his playmates to indulge his spirit of investigation.

At the early age of thirteen he matriculated in Trinity College, Cambridge, and, with rare penetration, soon discovered the leading defects in the higher education of the time. The principle of authority prevailed in instruction to the suppression of free inquiry. The university was engaged, not in broadening the field of knowledge by discovery of new truth, but in disseminating simply the

wisdom of the ancients. Aristotle was dictator, from whose utterances there was no appeal. "In the universities," he says, "all things are found opposite to the advancement of the sciences; for the readings and exercises are here so managed that it cannot easily come into any one's mind to think of things out of the common road; or if, here and there, one should venture to use a liberty of judging, he can only impose the task upon himself without obtaining assistance from his fellows; and, if he could dispense with this, he will still find his industry and resolution a great hindrance to his fortune. For the studies of men in such places are confined and pinned down to the writings of certain authors, from which, if any man happens to differ, he is presently reprehended as a disturber and innovator."

Though meeting with little sympathy in his spirit of free investigation, Bacon still followed the bent of his genius. While yet a student, he planned the immortal work which was to influence the subsequent course of philosophy. His opinions of the defects existing in the universities were only confirmed by age. Some years after leaving Cambridge, he advocated the establishment of a college which should be devoted to the discovery of new truths — "a living spring to mix with the stagnant waters." He complained that there was no school for the training of statesmen, — a fact that seemed to him prejudicial, not only to science, but also to the state, — and that the weighty affairs of the kingdom were intrusted to men whose only qualifications were a "knowledge of Latin and Greek, and verbal criticisms upon the dead languages."

After a residence of three years at the university, he went to Paris under the care of the English ambassador at the French court. He was sent on a secret mission to Elizabeth and discharged its duties with such ability as to win the queen's approbation. He afterward travelled in the French provinces and met many distinguished men — statesmen, philosophers, authors — who were impressed by his extraordinary gifts and attainments. The death of his father recalled him to England in 1579; and finding himself without adequate means to lead a life of philosophic investigation, it became necessary for him, as he expresses it, "to think how to live, instead of living only to think."

The two roads open to him were law and politics, and with his antecedents he naturally inclined to the latter. He applied to his uncle, Lord Burleigh, for a position; but the prime minister, fearing, it is said, the abilities of his nephew, used his influence to prevent the young applicant from obtaining a place of importance and emolument. Thus disappointed in his hopes, Bacon was reluctantly obliged to betake himself to the law. He gave himself with industry to his calling, and in a few years attained distinction for legal knowledge and skill. As might naturally be supposed from the philosophic cast of his mind, his studies were not confined to precedents and authorities, but extended to the universal principles of justice and the whole circle of knowledge. In 1590 he was made counsel-extraordinary to the queen — a position, it seems, of more honor than profit.

With this appointment began his political career. He sought worldly honors and wealth, but chiefly, as there

is reason to believe, in order that he might at last enjoy a competency, which would allow him to retire from official cares and pursue his philosophical studies without distraction. In 1592 he was elected a member of Parliament from Middlesex. He advocated comprehensive improvements in the law. On one occasion he incurred the queen's displeasure by opposing the early payment of certain subsidies to which the House had consented. When her displeasure was formally communicated to him, he calmly replied that "he spoke in discharge of his conscience and duty to God, to the queen, and to his country."

His connection with Parliament was characterized by activity, and his integrity at this time kept him from sacrificing the interests of England at the foot of the throne. As an orator he became affluent, weighty, and eloquent. "No man," says Ben Jonson, "ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness in what he uttered: no member of his speech but consisted of its own graces. His hearers could not cough or look aside from him without loss; he commanded when he spoke, and had his judges angry and pleased at his devotion. No man had their affections more in his power; the fear of every man that heard him was lest he should make an end."

In 1594 the office of solicitor-general became vacant, and Bacon set to work to obtain it. Every influence within his reach was brought to bear upon the queen. Lord Essex, the favorite of Elizabeth, interested himself especially in his behalf. But every effort proved unavailing. Bacon, like Spenser, felt the bitterness of seeking

preferment at court, and complained that he was like a child following a bird which, when almost within reach, continually flew farther. "I am weary of it," he said, "as also of wearying my friends."

To assuage his keen disappointment, Essex bestowed upon him an estate, valued at eighteen hundred pounds, in the beautiful village of Twickenham. The earl continued to befriend him through a long period. When Bacon wished to marry Lady Hatton, a woman of large fortune, Essex supported his suit with a strong letter to her parents. But in spite of Bacon's merit and his noble patron's warmth, the heart of the lady remained untouched; and fortunately for Bacon, as a biographer suggestively remarks, she afterward became the wife of his great rival, Sir Edward Coke.

When, a few years later, Essex, through his imprudence, incurred the queen's disfavor, and by treason forfeited his life, Bacon appeared against him. For this act he has been severely censured. Macaulay, especially, in his famous essay, displays the zeal of an advocate in making him appear in a bad light, affirming that "he exerted his professional talents to shed the earl's blood, and his literary talents to blacken the earl's memory." Though it cannot be maintained that Bacon acted the part of a high-minded, generous friend, or that his course was in any way justifiable, an impartial survey of the facts does not justify Macaulay's severity.

In 1597 Bacon published a collection of ten essays, which were afterward increased to fifty-eight. If he had written nothing else, these alone would have entitled him to an honorable place in English literature. Though brief

in form, they are weighty in thought. The style is clear; and the language, as in the essay on "Adversity," often rises into great beauty. They were composed, as he tells us, as a recreation from severer studies, but contain, nevertheless, the richest results of his thinking and experience. They were popular from the time of their publication; they were at once translated into French, Italian, and Latin, and no fewer than six editions appeared during the author's life.

An extract or two will illustrate their style. In the essay on "Adversity," he says: —

"The virtue of prosperity is temperance, the virtue of adversity is fortitude, which in morals is the more heroical virtue. Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, adversity is the blessing of the New, which carrieth the greater benediction, and the clearer revelation of God's favor. Yet, even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols; and the pencil of the Holy Ghost hath labored more in describing the afflictions of Job than the felicities of Solomon. Prosperity is not without many fears and distastes; and adversity is not without comforts and hopes."

In the essay on "Studies," which is one of the most compact and thoughtful of them all, we find the oft-quoted passage: —

"Studies serve for delight, for ornament, and for ability. Their chief use for delight is in privateness and retiring; for ornament, is in discourse; and for ability, is in the judgment and disposition of business: for expert men can execute, and perhaps judge of particulars, one by one;

but the general counsels, and the plots and marshalling of affairs, come best from those that are learned. To spend too much time in studies, is sloth; to use them too much for ornament, is affectation; to make judgment wholly by their rules, is the humor of a scholar: they perfect nature, and are perfected by experience: for natural abilities are like natural plants, that need pruning by study; and studies themselves do give forth directions too much at large, except they be bounded in by experience. Crafty men contemn studies, simple men admire them, and wise men use them; for they teach not their own use, but that is a wisdom without them and above them, won by observation. Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider. Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts, others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention."

Though it is through his other writings — the "Novum Organum" and "The Advancement of Learning" — that he has exerted the greatest influence, it is the "Essays" that have been most widely read, coming home, as he says, "to men's business and bosoms." Archbishop Whately said: "I am old-fashioned enough to admire Bacon, whose remarks are taken in and assented to by persons of ordinary capacity, and seem nothing very profound; but when a man comes to reflect and observe, and his faculties enlarge, he then sees more in them than he did at first, and more still as he advances further; his admiration of Bacon's profundity increasing as he himself grows intel-

lectually. Bacon's wisdom is like the seven-league boots, which would fit the giant or the dwarf, except only that the dwarf cannot take the same stride in them."

The distinguished Scotch philosopher, Dugald Stewart, bears similar testimony, which indeed is confirmed by the judgment of every competent reader: "The small volume to which he has given the title of 'Essays,' the best known and the most popular of all his works, is one of those where the superiority of his genius appears to the greatest advantage; the novelty and depth of his reflections often receiving a strong relief from the triteness of the subject. It may be read from beginning to end in a few hours, and yet after the twentieth perusal one seldom fails to remark in it something overlooked before. This, indeed, is a characteristic of all Bacon's writings, and is only to be accounted for by the inexhaustible aliment they furnish to our own thoughts, and the sympathetic activity they impart to our torpid faculties."

After the accession of James I. in 1603, whose favor he made great efforts to placate, Bacon rose rapidly in position and honor. That year he was elevated to the order of knighthood, and the following year appointed salaried counsel to the king — a mark of favor almost without precedent. In 1613 he was advanced to the office of attorney-general. In 1617 he was created Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England — a dignity of which he was proud; and the following year he was made Lord High Chancellor, the summit of his ambition and political elevation.

Fond of elegant surroundings, he lived in great state, with liveried servants, beautiful mansions, and magnificent gardens. He was inconsiderate and lavish in his expendi-

tures; and while laboring with conscientious fidelity to improve the laws of the kingdom and to facilitate the administration of justice, his personal character, it must be acknowledged, did not remain above suspicion and reproach. He was unduly subservient to the king; and to maintain his outward splendor, he accepted presents, if not bribes, from persons interested in his judicial decisions. Being tried by Parliament, he made confession to twenty-eight charges of corruption, whereupon he was condemned to pay a fine of forty thousand pounds, to be imprisoned in the Tower during the king's pleasure, and to be debarred from any office in the state. Thus, in 1621, Bacon fell from his high position, ruined in fortune and broken in spirit. Though released from the Tower after an imprisonment of two days, and relieved also of the payment of the fine, he never recovered from his disgrace.

It is difficult now to determine the extent of his guilt. It is certain that he was not, what Pope pronounced him, "the meanest of mankind." The truth probably is that he was morally weak rather than basely corrupt. Though he received presents or bribes, it can hardly be shown that he purposely perverted justice. It was not unusual for judges at that day to receive presents. There is no sufficient reason to doubt his sincerity and justice when he wrote: "For the briberies and gifts wherewith I am charged, when the book of hearts shall be opened, I hope I shall not be found to have the troubled fountain of the corrupt heart, in a depraved habit of taking rewards to pervert justice; howsoever I may be frail, and partake of the abuses of the time." He was, in some measure, a victim of secret enmity and parliamentary clamor; and in

his will he did wisely to appeal from the prejudice about him to the impartial judgment of posterity. "For my name and memory," he pathetically writes, "I leave it to men's charitable speeches, to foreign nations, and the next ages."

The colossal cast of Bacon's mind is seen in his great philosophical scheme entitled the "Instauratio Magna, or the Great Institution of True Philosophy," which embodies his principal writings. It was to consist of six parts, the completion of which was necessarily beyond the power of one man or even of one age: —

I. *Divisions of the Sciences.* "This part exhibits a summary, or universal description, of such science and learning as mankind is, up to this time, in possession of."

II. *Novum Organum; Precepts for the Interpretation of Nature.* "The object of the second part is the doctrine touching a better and more perfect use of reasoning in the investigation of things, and the true helps of the understanding; that it may by this means be raised, as far as our human and mortal nature will admit, and be enlarged in its powers so as to master the arduous and obscure secrets of nature."

III. *Phenomena of the Universe; or, Natural and Experimental History on which to found Philosophy.* "The third part of our work embraces the phenomena of the universe; that is to say, experience of every kind, and such a natural history as can form the foundation of an edifice of philosophy."

IV. *Scale of Understanding.* "The fourth part . . . is in fact nothing more than a particular and fully developed application of the second part."

V. *Precursors or Anticipations of the Second Philosophy.* "We compose this fifth part of the work of those matters which we have either discovered, tried, or added."

VI. *Sound Philosophy, or Active Science.* "Lastly, the sixth part of our work (to which the rest are subservient and auxiliary) discloses and propounds that philosophy which is reared and formed by the legitimate, pure, and strict method of investigation previously taught and prepared. But it is both beyond our power and expectation to perfect and conclude this last part."

In the first part of this vast scheme Bacon embodied, in a revised form, the "Advancement of Learning," his earliest philosophical work, published in 1605. It made a complete survey of the field of learning, for the purpose of indicating what departments of knowledge had received due attention, and what subjects yet needed cultivation. It is a rich mine of wisdom and learning. But the most celebrated part of the "Instauratio Magna" is the "Novum Organum," in which Bacon's philosophical method is unfolded. It is written in the form of aphorisms, several of which, including the first, are here given as indicating the character of the whole work: —

"I. Man, as the minister and interpreter of nature, does and understands as much as his observations on the order of nature, either with regard to things or the mind, permit him, and neither knows nor is capable of more.

"IX. The sole cause and root of almost every defect in the sciences is this; that whilst we falsely admire and extol the powers of the human mind, we do not search for its real helps.

"XIX. There are and can exist but two ways of investi-

gating and discovering truth. The one hurries on rapidly from the senses and particulars to the most general axioms; and from them as principles and their supposed indisputable truth derives and discovers the intermediate axioms. This is the way now in use. The other constructs its axioms from the senses and particulars, by ascending continually and gradually, till it finally arrives at the most general axioms, which is the true but unattempted way."

A well-known and valuable portion of the "Novum Organum" is the discussion of the influences which warp the human mind in the pursuit of truth. These warping influences Bacon calls *idols;* and his exposition of the subject, which cannot be fully inserted here, has never been surpassed in analytical scope and power.

"XXXIX. Four species of idols beset the human mind; to which, for distinction's sake, we have assigned names, calling the first, idols of the tribe; the second, idols of the den; the third, idols of the market; the fourth, idols of the theatre.

"XLI. The idols of the tribe are inherent in human nature, and the very tribe or race of man. For man's sense is falsely asserted to be the standard of things. On the contrary, all the perceptions, both of the senses and the mind, bear reference to man, and not to the universe, and the human mind resembles those uneven mirrors, which impart their own properties to different objects, from which rays are emitted, and distort and disfigure them.

"XLII. The idols of the den are those of each individual. For everybody (in addition to the errors common to the race of man) has his own individual den or cavern,

which intercepts and corrupts the light of nature; either from his own peculiar and singular disposition, or from his education and intercourse with others, or from his reading, and the authority acquired by those whom he reverences and admires, or from the different impressions produced on the mind, as it happens to be preoccupied and predisposed, or equable and tranquil, and the like; so that the spirit of man (according to its several dispositions) is variable, confused, and, as it were, actuated by chance; and Heraclitus said well that men search for knowledge in lesser worlds, and not in the greater or common world.

"XLIII. There are also idols formed by the reciprocal intercourse and society of man with man, which we call idols of the market, from the commerce and association of men with each other. For men converse by means of language; but words are formed at the will of the generality; and there arises from a bad and unapt formation of words a wonderful obstruction to the mind. Nor can the definitions and explanations, with which learned men are wont to guard and protect themselves in some instances, afford a complete remedy; words still manifestly force the understanding, throw everything into confusion, and lead mankind into vain and innumerable controversies and fallacies.

"XLIV. Lastly, there are idols which have crept into men's minds from the various dogmas of peculiar systems of philosophy, and also from the perverted rules of demonstration, and these we denominate idols of the theatre. For we regard all the systems of philosophy hitherto received or imagined, as so many plays brought out and performed, creating fictitious and theatrical worlds."

However much men may differ in their estimate of Bacon's method and position in philosophy, all agree in recognizing his intellectual greatness. It would be easy to fill pages with the glowing tributes that have been paid him, not only by English, but also by French and German, writers. Hallam, who is not given to inconsiderate panegyric, says: "If we compare what may be found in the sixth, seventh, and eighth books 'De Augmentis'; in the 'Essays,' the 'History of Henry VII.,' and the various short treatises contained in his works on moral and political wisdom, and on human nature, from experience of which all such wisdom is drawn, with the Rhetoric, Ethics, and Politics of Aristotle, or with the historians most celebrated for their deep insight into civil society and human character; with Thucydides, Tacitus, Philip de Comines, Machiavel, Davila, Hume, we shall, I think, find that one man may almost be compared with all of these together."

An able German scholar assigns Bacon a high rank as a philosopher and educator because he was "the first to say to the learned men who lived and toiled in the languages and writings of antiquity, and who were mostly only echoes of the old Greeks and Romans, yea, who knew nothing better than to be such: 'There is also a present, only open your eyes to recognize its splendor. Turn away from the shallow springs of traditional natural science, and draw from the unfathomable and ever freshly flowing fountain of creation. Live in nature with active senses; ponder it in your thoughts, and learn to comprehend it, for thus you will be able to control it. Power increases with knowledge.'"[1]

[1] Raumer, "Geschichte der Pädagogik."

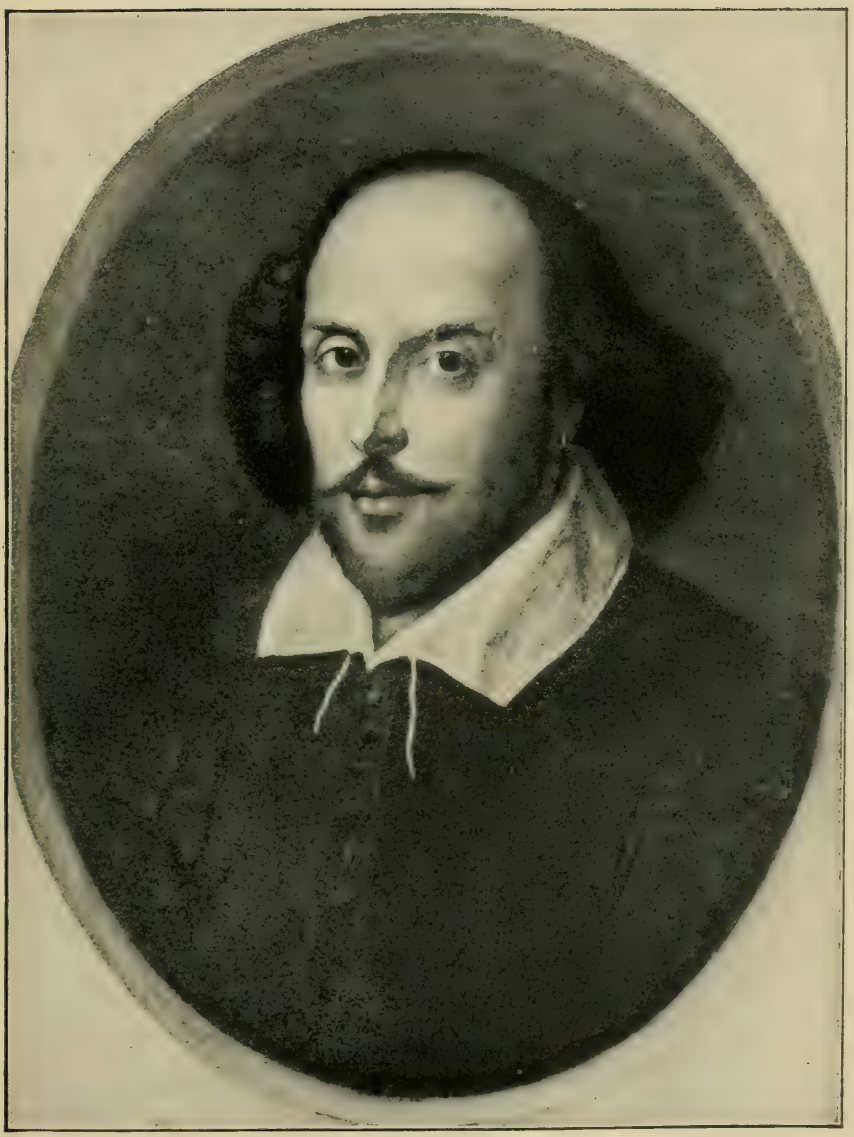
Bacon had unswerving faith in the power of truth, and he confidently looked forward to a time when the value of his teachings would be recognized. The fulfilment of the following prediction establishes the character and mission of the prophet: "I have held up a light in the obscurity of philosophy," he says, "which will be seen centuries after I am dead. It will be seen amid the erection of temples, tombs, palaces, theatres, bridges, making noble roads, cutting canals, granting multitudes of charters and liberties for comfort of decayed companies and corporations; the foundation of colleges and lectures for learning and the education of youth; foundations and institutions of orders and fraternities for nobility, enterprise, and obedience; but, above all, the establishing good laws for the regulation of the kingdom, and as an example to the world."

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

From the time of Chaucer to the present day, England has produced many great writers — almost colossal figures in universal literature. Chaucer, Spenser, Bacon, Milton, Tennyson — these are great names; but by common consent Shakespeare towers above them all. The case is not altered when we take into account other nations. Greece had its Homer; Rome, its Virgil; Italy, its Dante; Germany, its Goethe; France, its Hugo. But if the judgment of competent critics were taken, Shakespeare would be placed on the throne as king among great writers, living and dead.

If the great dramatist had left an autobiography, we should esteem it one of our greatest literary treasures. If some Boswell had dogged his footsteps, noted carefully the incidents of his everyday life, and recorded the sentiments and thoughts that dropped spontaneously from his lips, how eagerly we should read the book to gain a clearer insight into the great master's soul. As it is, we are shut up to very meagre records, to names and dates found in business accounts or legal documents; and the greatest genius of all literature is concealed behind his works almost in the haze of a myth. We are dependent, not upon history, but upon fancy, to fill up the measure of what must have been an interesting, varied, and bountiful life.

William Shakespeare was born in Stratford-on-Avon,



Etched by Leopold Flaming after the Chandos painting.



April 23, 1564. On his father's side, he was of Saxon lineage; on his mother's side, he was of Norman descent; and in his character the qualities of these two races — Saxon sturdiness and Norman versatility — were exquisitely harmonized. His father, John Shakespeare, was a glover, wool-dealer, and yeoman, who attained prominence in Stratford as an alderman and bailiff. He was a man of substantial qualities, and for many years lived in easy circumstances; but afterward, when his son was passing into early manhood, he suffered a sad decline in fortune. William's mother, Mary Arden, was brought up on a landed estate; and besides inheriting from her the finer qualities of his mind, the future poet probably learned under her influence to appreciate the exceeding beauty of gentle and tender womanhood.

His education was received in the free school of Stratford, and included, besides the elementary branches of English, the rudiments of classical learning — the "small Latin and less Greek" which Ben Jonson attributed to him. His acquisitive powers were extraordinary; and, as is evident from his works, this elementary training, which appears so inadequate, was afterward increased by rich stores of learning and wisdom. He exhibits not only a wide general knowledge, but also a technical acquaintance with several callings, including law, medicine, and divinity.

In 1582, at the youthful age of eighteen, he married Ann Hathaway, who was eight years his senior. Whether the marriage was a matter of choice or, as some believe, a necessity forced upon him, does not clearly appear. His wife, the daughter of a substantial yeomen, was not unworthy of him; and the marriage was probably a love

match, which proudly disdained the disparity in years. It is assumed by many critics that the union was necessarily an unhappy one; but an examination of the evidence leads to a different conclusion. In his sonnets there are several loving passages that seem to refer to his wife; and as soon as he had acquired wealth in his theatrical career in the metropolis, he returned to Stratford to spend his last years in the bosom of his family.

Several years after his marriage, at the age of twenty-two, he went to London. There is a tradition that his departure from Stratford was the result of a deer-stealing escapade, for which he was sharply prosecuted by an irate landlord. Though the poaching is probably not a myth, his departure may be satisfactorily explained on other grounds. Conscious no doubt of his native genius, it was but natural for him to seek his fortune amidst the opportunities afforded in a large city.

His poetic gifts and his acquaintance with the drama, as learned through visiting troupes in his native village, naturally drew him to the theatre. He held at first a subordinate position, and worked upward by degrees. He recast plays and performed as an actor, for which his handsome and shapely form peculiarly fitted him. "The top of his performance," says an old historian, "was the Ghost in his own Hamlet." His progress was rapid, and at the end of six years he had achieved no small reputation. His success aroused the envy of some of his fellow-playwrights; and Greene, in a scurrilous pamphlet, accused him of plagiarism, calling him "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers."

His ability attracted the attention of the court and the

nobility. To the young Earl of Southampton he dedicated in 1593 his "Venus and Adonis," which the poet, in a short and manly dedicatory letter, styles "the first heir of my invention"; and in return he is said to have received from that nobleman the princely gift of a thousand pounds. In Spenser's "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," we find this reference to Shakespeare: —

> "And here, though last not least, is Aetion;
> A gentler shepherd may nowhere be found;
> Whose muse, full of high thought's invention,
> Doth, like himself, heroically sound."

His plays delighted Elizabeth, who was a steady patron of the drama; and there is a tradition that the queen was so pleased with Falstaff in "King Henry the Fourth," that she requested the poet to continue the character in another play and to portray him in love. The result was "The Merry Wives of Windsor."

Unlike many of his fellow-dramatists, Shakespeare avoided a life of extravagance and dissipation. He showed that high literary genius is not inconsistent with business sagacity. Not content with being actor and author, he became a large shareholder in the Blackfriars and the Globe, the two leading theatres of his day. Wealth accumulated; and with an affectionate remembrance of his native town, he purchased in 1597 a handsome residence in Stratford. He continued to make judicious investments; and a careful estimate places his income in 1608 at about four hundred pounds a year—equivalent to $12,000 at the present time.

We have several pleasing glimpses of his social life in London. He had a reputation for civility and honesty;

he frequented the Mermaid, where he met Ben Jonson and the other leading wits of his day. Beaumont probably had him in mind when he wrote: —

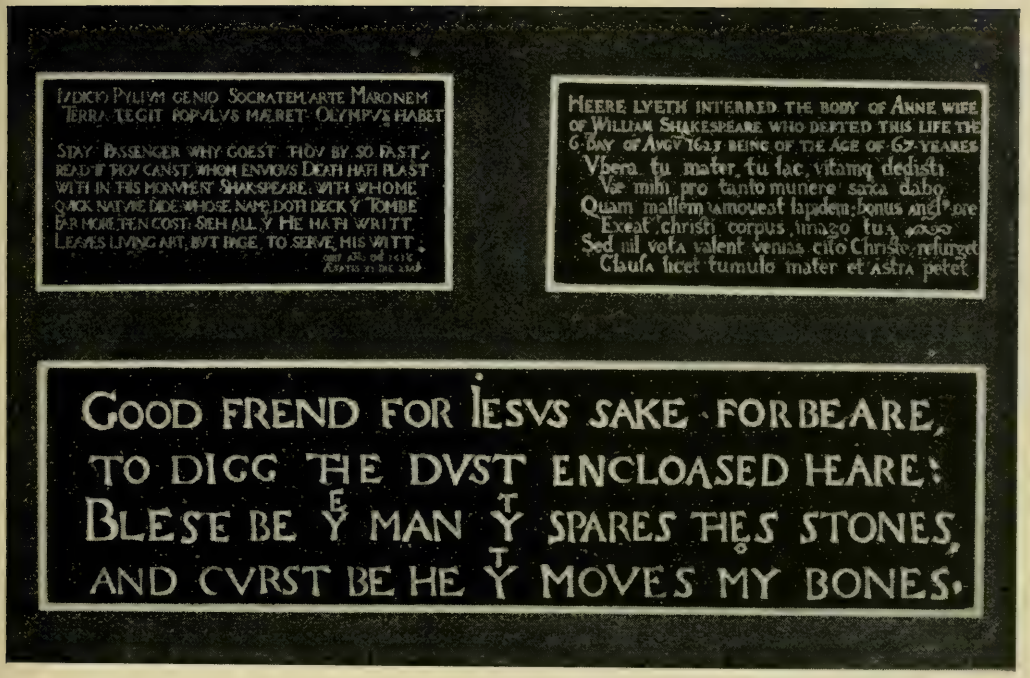
> "What things have we seen
> Done at the Mermaid! Heard words that have been
> So nimble, and so full of subtile flame,
> As if that every one from whence they came
> Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
> And had resolved to live a fool the rest
> Of his dull life."

The following testimony of the rough, upright Ben Jonson is of special value: "I loved the man, and do honor his memory, on this side idolatry, as much as any. He was indeed honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent phantasy, brave notions, and gentle expressions."

With wealth and genius, it was not unnatural for the poet to desire a higher social rank. Accordingly, we find that in 1599, no doubt through his influence, a coat-of-arms was granted to his father. He grew tired of the actor's profession, chafing under its low social standing and its enslaving exactions upon his time and person. In one of his sonnets he writes: —

> "Alas! 'tis true I have gone here and there,
> And made myself a motley to the view;
> Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
> Made old offences of affections new;
> Most times it is that I have looked on truth
> Askance and strangely."

It is probable that Shakespeare ceased to be an actor in 1604, though he continued to write for the stage, and pro-



The gravestones of Shakespeare and his wife Anne rest side by side upon the second step of the altar in the chancel of Holy Trinity Church. A flat stone with the large inscription deeply engraved upon it covers Shakespeare's remains. Of the two small inscriptions, the one at the right is upon a brass plate set into the stone which rests upon the grave of Shakespeare's wife Anne. The one upon the left —

Judicio Pulium cenio Socratem arte Moronem
Terra tecit populus maeret Olumpus habet.

Stay Passenger; why goest thou by so fast,
Read, if thou canst, whom envious death has plast
Within this monument, Shakspeare, withom
Quick Nature dide; whose name doth deck ys. tombe
Far more than cost; sith all yt. he hath writt
Leaves living art but page to serve his witt.

Obiit Ano. Doi 1616.
Etatis 53. Die 23. Ap.

is upon a marble tablet directly below the Monumental Bust of Shakespeare.

duced all his greatest masterpieces after that date. About 1611 he retired to his native town to live in quiet domestic enjoyment. How great the contrast with the excitements, labors, and vanities of his career in London! The last five years of his life were spent in domestic comforts, local interests, the entertainment of friends, the composition of one or two great dramas, with an occasional visit to the scene of his former struggles and triumphs. He died April 23, 1616, on the anniversary of his birth, and was buried in the parish church of Stratford. If we may credit tradition, he rose from a sick bed to entertain Jonson and Drayton, and the convivial excesses of the occasion brought on a fatal relapse. His tomb bears the following inscription: —

> "Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear,
> To dig the dust enclosed here:
> Blest be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones."

Summing up his character, as gleaned from hints scattered through the scanty biographic materials, Hudson justly says: "There is enough, I think, to show that in all the common dealings of life he was eminently gentle, candid, upright, and judicious; open-hearted, genial, and sweet in his social intercourses; among his companions and friends full of playful wit and sprightly grace; kind to the faults of others, severe to his own; quick to discern and acknowledge merit in another, modest and slow of finding it in himself; while, in the smooth and happy marriage, which he seems to have realized, of the highest poetry and art with successful and systematic prudence in

business affairs, we have an example of compact and well-rounded practical manhood, such as may justly engage our admiration and respect."

Were the meagre facts in the outward life of this great man all that we know of him, how incomplete and unsatisfactory our knowledge! But there is another life besides the outward and visible one — a life of the soul. It is by the aims, thoughts, and feelings of this interior life that the character and greatness of a man are to be judged. Outward circumstances are, in a large measure, fortuitous; at most they but aid or hinder the operations of the spirit within — plume or clip its wings. It is when we turn to this interior life of Shakespeare, and measure its creations and experiences, that we learn his unapproachable greatness. Many other authors have surpassed him in the variety and splendor of outward circumstances; many warriors and statesmen and princes have been occupied with larger national interests; but where is the man that can compare with him in the richness and extent of this life of the soul?

There is no class of society, from kings to beggars, from queens to hags, with which he has not entered into the closest sympathy, thinking their thoughts and speaking their words. By his overpowering intuition, he comprehended, in all their extent, the various hopes, fears, desires, and passions of the human heart; and, as occasion arose, he gave them the most perfect utterance they have ever found. Every age and country — early England, mediæval Italy, ancient Greece and Rome — were all seized in their essential features.

There were no thoughts too high for his strong intellect

to grasp; and the great world of nature, with its mysteries, its abounding beauty, its subtle harmonies, its deep moral teachings, he irradiated with the light of his genius. If, as a poet has said, "we live in thoughts, not years, in feelings, not in figures on the dial," how infinitely rich the quarter of a century Shakespeare spent in London! In comparison with his all-embracing experience, the career of an Alexander, or Cæsar, or Napoleon, with its far extending ambition and manifold interests, loses its towering greatness; for the English poet lived more than they all.

One great ground of Shakespeare's preëminence is his sanity. He was singularly free from the eccentricity and one-sidedness that so often accompany genius. His marvellous power in seeing clearly and judging justly will be more clearly understood by comparing him with recent schools or tendencies in literature. For nearly a century the literary world has been divided into romanticists and realists. The former emphasize the ideal side of life, and in extreme types run into extravagance; the latter emphasize what is actual in life, often showing preference for the low and immoral. Both tendencies represent truth in part; but in Shakespeare we find them held in equal balance. The ideal and the real are harmoniously blended in him as in actual life. He saw and judged life in its completeness.

It is a mistake to suppose that Shakespeare owed everything to nature, and that in his productions he was guided alone by instinct. This view was maintained by his earliest biographer, Rowe, who says: "Art had so little, and nature so large a share in what Shakespeare did, that for aught I know the performances of his youth were the best."

But Ben Jonson shows a keener discernment: —

> "Yet must I not give Nature all: thy Art,
> My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
> For a good Poet's made, as well as born,
> And such wert thou."

An examination of his works in their chronological order shows that his genius underwent a process of development, and was perfected by study, knowledge, and experience. His earliest dramas, such as "Henry VI.," "Love's Labor's Lost," "Comedy of Errors," and "The Two Gentlemen of Verona," all of which were composed prior to 1591, are lacking in the freedom and perfection of his later works. They show the influence of the contemporary stage, and declamation often takes the place of genuine passion.

But after this apprentice work, the poet passed into the full possession of his powers, and produced, during what may be regarded the middle period of his literary career, an uninterrupted succession of masterpieces, among which may be mentioned "The Merchant of Venice," "A Midsummer Night's Dream," "Romeo and Juliet," "As You Like It," "Hamlet," and most of his English historical plays. All these appeared before 1600. With increasing age and experience, the poet passed on to profounder themes. It was during this final stage of his development that he gave "King Lear," "Macbeth," and "Othello" to the world, the two former in 1605 and the latter in 1609.

But in one particular his earlier and his later dramas are alike. The personality of the poet is concealed in them all. He enters into sympathy with all his creations, but he can be identified with none. He is greater than any one



MARY ARDEN'S COTTAGE — WILMCOTE.

"Conspicuous for its quaint gables and for its mellow colours and impressive antiquity."
— WILLIAM WINTER.

of them, or than all of them combined; for it is in him that they all originated and find their unity. Thus to create and project into the world a large number of independent beings is an evidence of the highest genius. Byron could not do it; for through all his works, whatever may be the names of his characters, we recognize the lawless, passionate, misanthropic poet himself. The same is true of Goethe and Victor Hugo, who embody in their works their didactic principles or their idealized experience. Among the world's great writers, Shakespeare and Homer almost alone are hidden behind their works like a mysterious presence.

Shakespeare possessed a profound knowledge of his art. This is obvious both from Hamlet's famous instruction to the players and from the structure of his dramas. He has been criticised for discarding classic rules; but the censure is most unjust. Genius has an inalienable right to prescribe its own creative forms. He laid aside the hampering models of antiquity in order to give the world a new and richer dramatic form. The simple action of the ancient drama could not be adjusted to his great and complex themes. His works possess the one great essential characteristic — that of organic unity. After Shakespeare had completed his apprenticeship, his dramas embody an almost faultless structure; they are not pieces of elaborate and elegant patchwork, but of consistent and regular growth. We can but wonder at the range and power of that intellect which grasped a multitude of characters, brought them into contact, carried them through a great variety of incidents, portrayed with justice and splendor the profoundest feelings and thoughts, traced their reciprocal influence, and

symmetrically conducted the whole to a striking and predetermined conclusion.

It scarcely detracts from his greatness that, instead of inventing his themes and characters, he borrowed them from history and literature. His borrowing was not slavish and weak. Whatever materials he appropriated from others, he reshaped and glorified; and he is no more to be censured than is the sculptor who takes from the stonecutter the rough marble that he afterward transforms into a Venus de' Medici or a Greek Slave. His works constitute a world in themselves; and with its inhabitants — with Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, Portia, Shylock, and many others — we are as well acquainted as with the personages of history.

When Chatham was once asked where he had learned his English history, he replied, "In the plays of Shakespeare." Nowhere else could he have better caught its spirit. In the historical plays of the great dramatist, the mediæval history of England is made to live again; not only its leading events are brought before us, but also its leading actors, animated by their moving passions. "If the poet's work," says Green, "echoes sometimes our national prejudice and unfairness of temper, it is instinct throughout with our English humor, with our English love of hard fighting, our English faith in goodness, and in the doom that waits upon triumphant evil, our English pity for the fallen."

The poet exhibits an almost perfect acquaintance with human nature. His creations are not personified moral qualities or individualized passions, but real persons. They are beings of flesh and blood; but by their relations

and reciprocal influence they are lifted above the dull and commonplace. Shakespeare removes the veil that hides from common vision the awful significance of human influence, and reveals it in its subtle workings and mighty results. He enables us to see, beneath a placid or rippling surface, the deep currents that move society.

His types of noble men and women — Orlando, Horatio, Antonio, Portia, Hermione, Desdemona, and many others — are almost matchless. He furnishes us a gallery of exalted manhood and womanhood. Their goodness is beautiful in its ease, simplicity, and naturalness. "The good they do, in doing it, pays itself; if they do you a kindness, they are not at all solicitous to have you know and remember it; if sufferings and hardships overtake them, if wounds and bruises be their portion, they never grumble or repine at it." And the women, to quote Hudson further, "are strong, tender, and sweet, yet never without a sufficient infusion of brisk natural acid and piquancy to keep their sweetness from palling on the taste; they are full of fresh, healthy sentiment, but never at all touched with sentimentality."

As his mode of expression was always suited to his changing characters, he exemplified every quality of style in turn. His faculties and taste were so exquisitely adjusted, that his manner was always in keeping with his matter. He drew with equal facility on the Saxon and the Latin elements of our language, and attained with both the same incomparable results. He had a prodigious faculty for language, surpassing in copiousness every other English writer. The only term that adequately describes his manner of writing is *Shakespearian* — a term that com-

prehends a great deal. It includes vividness of imagination, depth of thought, delicacy of feeling, carefulness of observation, discernment of hidden relations, and whatever else may be necessary to clothe thought in expressions of supreme fitness and beauty.

Far above every other writer of ancient or modern times Shakespeare voices, in its manifold life, the human soul. This fact makes his works a storehouse of riches, to which we constantly turn. Are we oppressed at times with a morbid feeling of the emptiness of life? How perfectly Shakespeare voices our sentiment: —

> "Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more: it is a tale
> Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
> Signifying nothing."

Or again: —

> "We are such stuff
> As dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep."

If we recognize the fact that somehow there is a mysterious power controlling our lives, we are told —

> "There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough-hew them how we will."

But, as our consciousness tells us, we are not wholly at the mercy of this overruling agency: —

> "Our remedies oft in ourselves do lie,
> Which we ascribe to heaven; the fated sky
> Gives us free scope, only doth backward push
> Our slow designs when we ourselves are dull."

What beautiful expression he gives to the trite observation that contentment is better than riches!

> "'Tis better to be lowly born,
> And range with humble livers in content,
> Than to be perk'd up in glistering grief,
> And wear a golden sorrow."

What clear expression he gives to the indistinct feeling of beauty that sometimes comes to us in the presence of some object in nature! He surprises its secret, and embodies it in an imperishable word: —

> "How sweet the moonlight *sleeps* upon this bank!"

But why multiply illustrations, when they are found on almost every page of his works?

And what shall be said of Shakespeare's influence? He so entirely eclipsed his contemporary dramatists that their works are scarcely read. There are passages in his works that we could wish omitted — panderings to the corrupt taste of the time. But they are exceptional, and at heart the poet's sympathy, as in the case of every truly great man, is on the side of virtue. His writings, as a whole, carry with them the uplifting power of high thought, noble feeling, and worthy deeds.

Many of his thoughts and characters pass into the intellectual life of each succeeding generation. "Hamlet," "The Merchant of Venice," and "Romeo and Juliet" are read by nearly every young student; and to have read any one of Shakespeare's masterpieces intelligently marks an epoch in the intellectual life of youth. But his dramas give pleasure not alone to the young. With minds enriched by experience and study, we turn, in the midst of

active life, to his works for recreation and instruction. He but appears greater with our enlarged capacity to appreciate him. If he gathered about him a circle of cultivated friends and admirers in his life, he has shown himself still stronger in death. The circle has widened until it comprehends many lands.

He has exerted a noteworthy influence upon foreign literature, especially in Germany and France. Translated into the languages of these countries, his works have been extensively studied, admired, and imitated. He is lectured on in German universities, and some of his ablest critics have been German and French. He has stimulated a prodigious amount of intellectual activity; and his biographers, editors, translators, critics, and commentators are numbered by the hundred. No other English author has gathered about him such an array of scholarship and literary ability.

There is no abatement of interest in his works. Societies are organized for their systematic study, and periodicals are devoted to their illustration. There is no likelihood that he will ever be superseded; as he wrote in the proud presentiment of genius, —

> "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
> Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme."

Future ages will turn to his works as a mirror of nature, and find in them the most perfect expression of their deepest and most precious experience. It is safe to say that his productions are as imperishable as the English language or the English race.



THE AVON AND HOLY TRINITY CHURCH.

"Thou soft-flowing Avon, by thee, silver stream,
Of things more than mortal sweet Shakespeare would dream."
— GARRICK.

ADDENDUM ON THE DRAMA.

THE essential thing in the drama is action. It is thus distinguished from the epic, which narrates heroic deeds, and from the lyric which expresses intense emotion. The drama presents a series of grave or humorous incidents that terminate in a striking result. Its ultimate basis is found in our natural love of imitation; and hence it is not restricted to any race or age or country. India and China, Greece and Rome, no less than modern nations, delighted in dramatic exhibitions, and produced a notable dramatic literature. Obviously the drama is not inherently evil; and if it has often been condemned by pagan sage and Christian teacher, the condemnation has been evoked by the degeneracy and dissoluteness of the stage.

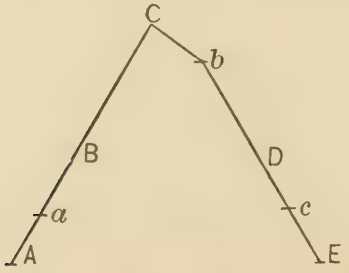
The principal species of the drama are tragedy and comedy. Tragedy represents an important and serious action, which usually has a fatal termination; it appeals to the earnest side of our nature, and moves our deepest feelings. Comedy consists in a representation of light and amusing incidents; it exhibits the foibles of individuals, the manners of society, and the humorous accidents of life. The laws of the drama are substantially the same for both tragedy and comedy. There must be unity in the dramatic action. This requires that the separate incidents contribute in some way to the development of the plot and to the final result or *dénouement*. A collection of disconnected scenes, no matter how interesting in themselves, would not make a drama.

In addition to unity of action, which is obviously the indispensable law of the drama, two other unities have been prescribed from a very early day. The one is unity of time, which requires that the action fall within the limits of a single day; the other is unity of place, which requires that the action occur in the same locality. While evidently artificial and dispensable, these latter unities conduce to clear and concise treatment. Among the Greeks and Romans the three unities, as they are called, were strictly observed; they have been followed also by the French drama; but the English stage, breaking away in the days of Elizabeth from every artificial restriction, recognizes unity of action alone.

The action of the drama should exhibit movement or progress, in which several stages may be clearly marked. The *introduction* acquaints us, more or less fully, with the subject to be treated. It usually brings before us some of the leading characters, and shows us the circumstances in which they are placed. After the introduction follows the *growth* or *development* of the action toward the climax. From the days of Aristotle, this part of the drama has been called "the tying of the knot," and it needs to be managed with great care. If the development is too slow, the interest lags; if too rapid, the climax appears tame.

The interest of a drama depends in large measure upon the successful arrangement of the *climax*, or the point in which the opposing forces immediately confront each other. In our best dramas it usually occurs near the middle of the piece. From this point the action proceeds to the close or *dénouement*. The knot is untied; the complications in which the leading characters have become involved are either happily removed, or lead to an inevitable catastrophe. Avoiding every digression, the action should go forward rapidly, in order not to weary the patience and dissipate the interest of the spectator. The *dénouement* should not be dependent upon some foreign element introduced at the last moment, but should spring naturally from the antecedent action.

In addition to the five principal parts just indicated — introduction, rise or tying of the knot, climax, fall or untying of the knot, and *dénouement* — there are three other elements or factors that need to be distinguished. The first is the cause or exciting impulse of the dramatic action, and naturally stands between the introduction and the rise or tying of the knot. The second is the cause or tragic impulse of the counteraction, and stands between the climax and the fall or untying of the knot. The third is the cause or impulse that holds the action in check for a moment before reaching its final issue, and stands between the fall and the *dénouement*. The structure and eight component parts of a complete drama may be represented in a diagram as follows: —



A = Introduction.
B = Rise or tying of knot.
C = Climax.
D = Fall or untying of knot.
E = *Dénouement*.
a = Cause or exciting impulse.
b = Tragic impulse.
c = Impulse of last suspense.

CIVIL WAR OR PURITAN PERIOD.

PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

PROSE. — Jeremy Taylor (1613–1667). Theologian and preacher. Author of "Liberty of Prophesying" (1647), "Holy Living and Dying" (1651), etc.

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon (1608–1674). Statesman and author of "The History of the Rebellion" (1702).

Richard Baxter (1615–1691). Theologian and preacher. Author of "The Saints' Everlasting Rest" (1649), "A Call to the Unconverted" (1657), "The Reformed Pastor," and a hundred and fifty other works.

Izaak Walton (1593–1683). Author of "The Complete Angler," and several excellent biographies, including that of Hooker.

Sir Thomas Browne (1605–1682). Author of "Religio Medici" (1643), "Vulgar Errors" (1646), and "Urn Burial" (1658).

POETRY. — Edmund Waller (1605–1687). One of the principal metaphysical or artificial poets.

Abraham Cowley (1618–1667). The most popular poet of his time. Author of "The Mistress," a collection of love verses, "Davideis," an epic on David, "The Late Civil War," etc.

Francis Quarles (1592–1644). Author of "Divine Emblems" (1635), moral and religious poems, very popular in his day. "Milton was forced to wait," said Walpole, "till the world had done admiring Quarles."

George Herbert (1593–1632). Anglican clergyman, who wrote "The Temple" (1633), a collection of ecclesiastical poems, some of which are still held in favor.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674). Anglican clergyman, who wrote Anacreontic poems hardly in keeping with his profession.

GREAT REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

JOHN MILTON. JOHN BUNYAN.

IV.

CIVIL WAR OR PURITAN PERIOD.

(1625-1660.)

Puritan ascendency — Civil and religious conflicts — Policy of Charles I. — Petition of Right — Bad advisers of king — House of Commons — Independents — Voluntary exiles — Civil War — The commonwealth — Puritanism unfavorable to literature — Decay of drama — Jeremy Taylor — Earl of Clarendon — Baxter — Izaak Walton — "Metaphysical Poets" — Johnson's criticism — Edmund Waller — Abraham Cowley — JOHN MILTON — JOHN BUNYAN.

THOUGH short, this period is worthy of careful study. In a brief space of time, the dominant spirit of England was completely changed. The Puritan element gained the ascendency and stamped its character on the representative literature of the time. The religious element of life came into greater prominence; thought was turned from this world to the world to come, and in place of the common interests of humanity literature was largely occupied with religious truth. This difference, as compared with the preceding era, is clearly reflected in the great representative writers. Spenser, Bacon, and Shakespeare reflect large and secular phases of the spacious times of Elizabeth; Milton and Bunyan, in their greatest works, set forth the theological beliefs and religious experience of Christendom.

This period is characterized by a great civil and religious conflict. The antagonistic elements that had long existed in England were brought into armed conflict for suprem-

acy. It was a time of unrest, controversy, persecution, and civil war — a condition of things highly unfavorable to literature. But for two great writers, who with vast genius voiced the deeper truths and aspirations of Puritan England, it would be regarded as a period of literary decadence, not unlike that following the age of Chaucer. As it is, the largeness, variety, and freedom of the First Creative Period are obviously lacking.

Charles I. ascended the throne in 1625 and moulded his policy according to high notions of the divine right of kings. He sought to establish an absolute monarchy. He assumed a haughty tone in addressing the Commons, telling them to "remember that parliaments were altogether in his power for their calling, sitting, or dissolution, and that, therefore, as he should find the fruits of them good or evil, they were to be, or not to be."

Two Parliaments were convened in rapid succession, but showed themselves unyielding to the royal will. When the king demanded supplies, the Commons clamored for redress of grievances. In each case the king dissolved Parliament and proceeded to levy taxes in defiance of law. Resistance to the royal demands led to immediate imprisonment; and in order to exercise his tyranny the better, he billeted soldiers among the people, and in some places established martial law.

A third Parliament was called in 1629. Finding it still more determined in resisting his arbitrary and tyrannical rule, the king resolved upon a change of tactics. After many attempted evasions, he was at last brought to ratify the Petition of Right, the second great charter of English liberty, which bound him not to levy taxes

without the consent of Parliament, not to imprison any person except by due legal process, and not to govern by martial law.

The rejoicing of the Commons over this victory was of short duration. The king was by nature insincere and false, and, on principle, did not feel himself bound to keep faith with the people. After collecting the supplies that had been granted him, he violated the solemn pledge of the Petition of Right, and dissolved Parliament with every mark of royal displeasure. For the following eleven years no Parliament was called together, and the king ruled as a despot.

Throughout the whole course of his usurpation the king was surrounded by bad advisers. Among them was the Duke of Buckingham, whom the Commons considered "the grievance of grievances"; Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, who hated the Puritans more than he hated the Catholics; and Thomas Wentworth, Earl Strafford, who had been won from the side of Parliament by bribes and honors, and to whom Mr. Pym suggestively remarked, "You have left us, but we will never leave you while your head is upon your shoulders." In natural sympathy with the king were the nobility of the realm and the prelates of the Established Church. With the supremacy of the crown, the position of the nobility would be guaranteed against republican tendencies. Since Charles I. was a zealous Episcopalian, the bishops had everything to gain from his absolutism. They warmly defended the divine right of kings. Here, then, we find two influential classes which were bound to the king by common sympathies and common interests. They were called Royalists.

The opposition, as we have seen, centred in the House of Commons, who represented the great middle class of England. They stood for constitutional government. For the most part they were Independents in religion and looked upon the usages and episcopal organization of the Anglican Church as savoring of Romanism. They made the individual congregation the source of authority, and, rejecting all human traditions, appealed to the Scriptures alone as the standard of faith and practice. Their form of worship was simple.

In emancipating men from the arbitrary rule of an external authority in religion, their principles were favorable to human dignity and freedom. Though persecuted to a greater or less degree during the reigns of Elizabeth and James I., the Independents had increased. Their trials had made them an earnest and determined body. In contrast with what they regarded the formalism and worldliness of the Established Church, many of them had gone to the opposite extreme of ascetic rigor. They denounced every kind of amusement, excluded music and art from the churches, acquired a stern solemnity of countenance, and affected a Scriptural style of speech.

To escape the annoyances and persecutions to which they were exposed in England, thousands had voluntarily exiled themselves in Holland, or braved the trials and dangers of the New World. It will be readily understood that men of this character — men of deep conviction, of high conceptions of individual liberty, and of fearless courage — could not be friendly to royal despotism. When placed in power in the House of Commons, they were stubborn and unyielding in their defence of constitutional liberty.

They could not be deceived by promises nor terrified by threats. Thus constitutional government in the Commons was arrayed against despotism in the king.

At last the resources of peace were exhausted, and in 1642 an appeal was made to arms. It is not necessary to follow the course of the Civil War. The gay Cavaliers about the king were no match for the serious Puritans. "I raised such men as had the fear of God before them," said Cromwell, "and made some conscience of what they did, and from that day forward, I must say to you, they were never beaten, and whenever they engaged against the enemy, they beat continually."

In 1649 Charles I. was brought to the block. England became a commonwealth, and with Cromwell as Lord Protector occupied a commanding position among European nations. The Protector was everywhere feared. He subjugated Ireland; from Spain he demanded the right of free trade with the West Indies; he suppressed the Barbary pirates of the Mediterranean; he forced the pope and Catholic rulers to cease their persecutions of Protestants. In treating with foreign sovereigns, he insisted on receiving the formal honors paid to the proudest monarchs of Europe. He returned two letters to Louis XIV. of France because they were not, as he thought, properly addressed. "What," exclaimed the French king to Cardinal Mazarin, "must I call this base fellow 'Our dear Brother Oliver'?" "Aye," replied the crafty minister, "or your father, if it will gain your ends; or you will have him at the gates of Paris!"

However conducive to the political grandeur of England, the triumph of Puritanism was not favorable to the cause

of letters. In the austere atmosphere of Puritanic piety there is little encouragement for art and literature.

The æsthetic sentiment is suppressed by ascetic views of life. The literary impulse finds expression only in devotional manuals, unadorned history, or severely logical theology. "The idea of the beautiful is wanting," says Taine, "and what is literature without it? The natural expression of the heart's emotions is proscribed, and what is a literature without it? They abolished as impious the free stage and the rich poesy which the Renaissance had brought them. They rejected as profane the ornate style and the ample eloquence which had been established around them by the imitation of antiquity and of Italy."

The decline of the drama became inevitable. Puritanism set itself not only against the theatre, but also against every other form of worldly amusement. "The very pastimes of the world," says Green, "had to conform themselves to the law of God. There were no more races, no more bull-baitings, no more cock-fighting, no more dances under the Maypole. Christmas had to pass without its junketings, or mummers, or mince-pies." Prynne, a distinguished Puritan lawyer, denounced players as the ministers of Satan, and theatres as the Devil's chapels. In the presence of this hostile spirit, the splendid Elizabethan drama languished and died.

There are several minor writers of this period who, on account of works of permanent interest, deserve some attention. Jeremy Taylor was a distinguished clergyman of the Established Church, who in 1642, "by his Majesty's command," published an able treatise in defence of the "Episcopacy." His "Liberty of Prophesy-

ing" was a plea for tolerance, and pointed out "the unreasonableness of prescribing to other men's faith, and the iniquity of persecuting differing opinion." In 1650 appeared his "Holy Living," and the year following his "Holy Dying," the two together making a devotional volume of great excellence. Throughout the conflicts of this period he was a zealous Royalist.

Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, "by the express command of Charles I.," wrote a "History of the Rebellion." He wrote as an apologist of the Royalist party; but in spite of its partisan spirit, the "History of the Rebellion" is a work of permanent value. The author was a man of ability and a prominent actor in the events he describes. He takes us behind the scenes, exhibiting the hidden springs of events. He strips his contemporaries of the prestige of birth and place, and portrays them as they appeared in the intimacy of personal intercourse. And with all this, there are agreeable touches of humor, many sage observations, and a courtly dignity of manner.

Richard Baxter, first an Anglican and afterward a Nonconformist minister, was an assiduous student, and wrote no fewer than one hundred and fifty works. Boswell once asked the great Dr. Johnson which of Baxter's works he recommended to be read. "Read any of them," shouted the old Churchman, "they are all good." This statement is rather strong; but two of Baxter's works, his "Saints' Everlasting Rest" and "The Reformed Pastor," have become religious classics, though less read now than formerly. In 1875 a statue was erected by Churchmen and Nonconformists, as the inscription

says, to Baxter at Kidderminster — the scene of his labors for nineteen years. On that occasion Dean Stanley delivered an address, in which he classed the great Nonconformist preacher among the men, not of words alone like Milton, nor of deeds alone like Cromwell, but of words and deeds together.

One of the most pleasing literary figures of this period is Izaak Walton. After accumulating a small fortune as a linen-draper, he retired from business in 1543, and became, as has been said, *pontifix piscatorum.* For forty years he swayed his fishing-rod as a sceptre over a circle of congenial and admiring friends. His "Complete Angler, or the Contemplative Man's Recreation," published in 1653, is a delightful book, which has passed through many editions both in England and this country.

With the exception of Milton, this period produced no great poet. The large, creative spirit of the preceding era, which reflected the grandeur and power of the English people, was succeeded by a narrow, artificial spirit, which devoted its energies to the turning of small compliments and the tracing of remote resemblances. Since the time of Dr. Johnson, it has been customary to designate these writers, among whom we may mention Waller, Cowley, Quarles, Herrick, Suckling, and Carew, as *metaphysical poets.*

The term *artificial* or *fantastic* would perhaps be more accurately descriptive of their character. They were men of learning, but took too much pains to show it. They wrote not from the emotions of the heart, but from the deliberate choice of the will; and hence they succeeded

not in giving voice to nature, but only in pleasing a false and artificial taste. They abound in far fetched and violent figures; and though we may be surprised at their ingenuity in discovering remote resemblances, we smile at the incongruous result. Thus Carew sings: —

"Ask me no more, whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day;
For in pure love, heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

"Ask me no more, whither doth haste
The nightingale, when May is past;
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters, and keeps warm her note.

"Ask me no more, where those stars light,
That downwards fall in dead of night;
For in your eyes they sit, and there
Fixed become, as in their sphere."

It is not in such laborious conceits that nature finds a voice. Speaking of these poets, Dr. Johnson says: "Their attempts were always analytic; they broke every image into fragments; and could no more represent, by their slender conceits and labored particularities, the prospects of nature, or the scenes of life, than he who dissects the sunbeam with a prism can exhibit the wide effulgence of a summer noon. What they wanted, however, of the sublime, they endeavored to supply by hyperbole; their amplification had no limits; they left not only reason but fancy behind them; and produced combinations of confused magnificence that not only could not be credited, but could not be imagined."

Yet a happy trifle was now and then hit upon. At rare intervals nature seems to have broken through the casing of artificiality. Francis Quarles gives forcible poetic expansion to Job's prayer, "Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past": —

> "Ah, whither shall I fly? What path untrod
> Shall I seek out to escape the flaming rod
> Of my offended, of my angry God?"

There is a light, careless spontaneity about the little song of Herrick's beginning: —

> "Gather the rose-buds while ye may,
> Old Time is still a flying;
> And this same flower that smiles to-day
> To-morrow will be dying."

The two leading representatives of the metaphysical or artificial school were Edmund Waller and Abraham Cowley. The former was an orator as well as poet, and served many times in Parliament. He delighted the House with his unfailing wit; but if Bishop Burnet is right, "He was only concerned to say that which should make him applauded; he never laid the business of the House to heart, being a vain and empty, though a witty, man."

Waller lived on terms of familiar intercourse with the Protector, and celebrated him in a "Panegyric," which ranks among the best of his longer poems: —

> "While with a strong and yet a gentle hand,
> You bridle faction and our hearts command,
> Protect us from ourselves, and from the foe,
> Make us unite, and make us conquer too."

At the restoration of Charles II. he showed himself a pliant courtier, and indited some verses to the king "Upon his Majesty's Happy Return." He was received with favor at court. The king called the poet's attention to the fact that the lines addressed to himself were inferior to those addressed to Cromwell. "Ah, Sire," replied the quick-witted author, "poets succeed better in fiction than in truth."

Though he wrote serious poems, especially in his old age, he was happiest in the lighter vein. He did not think deeply on great subjects, but expended his efforts in maintaining a superficial elegance. Among his songs there is one sweeter than all the rest, beginning: —

"Go, lovely rose!
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be."

Contemporary criticism is not always just. During the lifetime of the two poets the fame of Cowley entirely eclipsed that of Milton. Posterity has reversed this estimate; and we may now ask with Pope: —

"Who now reads Cowley? If he pleases yet,
His moral pleases, not his pointed wit;
Forgot his epic, nay, Pindaric art."

But the neglect into which he has fallen seems not wholly deserved. He was the most popular poet of his day; and this popularity may be taken as indicative of at least some degree of merit. While speaking of the general neglect of Cowley's works, Pope adds: —

"But still I love the language of his heart."

Cowper said that he "studied, prized, and wished that he had known ingenious Cowley." And Charles Lamb confesses that Cowley was very dear, though now out of fashion." His somewhat voluminous poems contain many passages that are well worth perusal. The "Davideis" is an epic poem on the troubles of David. The gem of the poem is a lyric, which the enamoured David sings as a serenade beneath the window of Michal, the daughter of Saul: —

"Awake, awake, my lyre!
And tell thy silent master's humble tale,
In sounds that may prevail;
Sounds that gentle thoughts inspire,
Though so exalted she,
And I so lowly be,
Tell her such different notes make all thy harmony."

After his death in 1667 he was buried with great pomp in Westminster Abbey, where he lies between Spenser and Chaucer. Though the king had done little for the poet, he was not ignorant of the latter's worth; and when the news of his death reached the court, his Majesty declared that "Cowley had not left a better man behind him in England."



Engraved by R. White. Early English portrait.

John Milton

JOHN MILTON.

In the period under consideration, Milton stands out in almost solitary grandeur. Intimately associated with the political and religious movements of his time, and identified in principle and in life with the Puritan party, he still rises grandly above the narrowness of his age. In one work at least he rivals the great achievements of the age of Elizabeth. He deserves to be recognized as the sublimest poet of all times. The far-fetched conceit of Dryden, whose genuine appreciation of Milton at a time when the Puritan poet was not in fashion is much to his credit, hardly surpasses the truth: —

> "Three poets, in three distant ages born,
> Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.
> The first in loftiness of thought surpassed;
> The next in majesty; in both the last.
> The force of nature could no further go:
> To make a third, she joined the other two."

John Milton was born in London, Dec. 9, 1608. His father, a man of the highest integrity, had been disinherited for espousing the Protestant cause; but, taking up the profession of a scrivener, he acquired the means of giving his son a liberal education. His mother, a woman of most virtuous character, was especially distinguished for her neighborhood charities. The private tutor of Milton was Thomas Young, a Puritan minister, who was

afterward forced to leave the kingdom on account of his religious opinions. Milton showed extraordinary aptness in learning; and when in 1624 he was sent to Cambridge, he was master of several languages and had read extensively in philosophy and literature. He remained at the university seven years and took the usual degrees.

The education of his time did not, however, meet with his approval, and in several of his works he has criticised the subjects and methods of study with astonishing independence and wisdom. His educational writings deservedly rank him as one of the notable educational reformers of modern times. "And for the usual method of teaching arts," he says, "I deem it to be an old error of universities, not yet well recovered from the scholastic grossness of barbarous ages, that, instead of beginning with arts most easy (and those be such as are most obvious to the senses), they present their young, unmatriculated novices at first coming with the most intellective abstractions of logic and metaphysics; so that they, having but newly left those grammatic flats and shallows, where they stuck unreasonably long to learn a few words with lamentable construction, and now on the sudden transported under another climate, to be tossed and turmoiled with their unballasted wits in fathomless and unquiet depths of controversy, do for the most part grow into hatred and contempt of learning, mocked and deluded all this while with ragged notions and babblements, while they expected delightful and worthy knowledge."

Milton was designed by his parents for the church. But as he approached maturity, he perceived that his religious convictions and ecclesiastical independence would

not allow him to enter the Established Church. We here see, perhaps, the effects of his Puritan training. Speaking of this matter he says: "Coming to some maturity of years and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unless he took with a conscience that he would relish, he must either perjure or split his faith, I thought better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing."

In 1632 he left the university, amidst the regrets of the fellows of his college, and retired to his father's house at Horton in Buckinghamshire. Here he spent five years in laborious study, in the course of which he perused all the Greek and Latin writers of the classic period. He also studied Italian and was accustomed, as he tells us, "to feast with avidity and delight on Dante and Petrarch." To use his own expression, he was letting his wings grow. In a letter to a friend he gives us some interesting particulars in regard to his studies and habits of life. "You well know," he says, "that I am naturally slow in writing and averse to write. It is also in my favor that your method of study is such as to admit of frequent interruptions, in which you visit your friends, write letters, or go abroad; but it is my way to suffer no impediment, no love of ease, no avocation whatever, to chill the ardor, to break the continuity, or divert the completion of my literary pursuits."

It was during this period of studious retirement that he produced several of his choicest poems, among which are "Comus," "L'Allegro," and "Il Penseroso." "Comus"

is the most perfect mask in any language. But "in none of the works of Milton," says Macaulay, "is his peculiar manner more happily displayed than in 'Allegro' and the 'Penseroso.' It is impossible to conceive that the mechanism of language can be brought to a more exquisite degree of perfection. These poems differ from others as attar of roses differs from ordinary rose water, the close-packed essence from the thin diluted mixture. They are indeed not so much poems as collections of hints, from each of which the reader is to make a poem for himself. Every epithet is a text for a stanza."

At the time these two poems were written, they stood as the high-water mark of English poetry. In their sphere they have never been excelled. In spite of little inaccuracies of description (for Milton was too much in love with books to be a close observer of nature), we find nowhere else such an exquisite delineation of country life and country scenes. These idyls are the more remarkable because their light, joyous spirit stands in strong contrast with the elevation, dignity, and austerity of his other poems.

Take, for example, this picture from a description of morning scenes: —

> "While the cock, with lively din,
> Scatters the rear of darkness thin;
> And to the stack, or the barn door,
> Stoutly struts his dames before."

Or this picture from a description of evening: —

> "Oft, on a plat of rising ground,
> I hear the far-off curfew sound
> Over some wide-watered shore,
> Swinging slow with sullen roar."

"Lycidas," published in 1637, is a pastoral elegy, commemorating the death of Edward King, a young college friend, who was drowned in the Irish Sea. It is one of the noblest elegies in our language, full of subdued, classic beauty. It contains a celebrated passage denouncing the mercenary character of the Anglican prelates. The passing of Lycidas from death to celestial life is likened to the course of the sun: —

> "So sinks the day star in the ocean-bed,
> And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
> And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
> Flames in the forehead of the morning sky."

At length Milton began to tire of his country life and to long for the pleasures and benefits of travel. In 1638 he left England for a tour on the Continent. At Paris he met Grotius, one of the most learned men of his age, who resided at the French capital as ambassador from the Queen of Sweden. After a few days he went to Italy and visited all the principal cities. He was everywhere cordially received by men of learning, who were not slow to recognize his genius. In his travels he preserved an admirable and courageous independence. Even under the shadow of St. Peter's, he made no effort to conceal his religious opinions. "It was a rule," he says, "which I laid down to myself in those places, never to be the first to begin any conversation on religion; but if any question were put to me concerning my faith, to declare it without any reserve or fear. . . . For about the space of two months I again openly defended, as I had done before, the reformed religion in the very metropolis of Popery."

The Italians, who were frugal in their praise of men from beyond the Alps, received some of Milton's productions with marks of high appreciation. This had the effect to confirm his opinion of his own power and to stimulate his hope of achieving something worthy of remembrance. "I began thus to assent both to them, and divers of my friends at home," he tells us in an interesting passage, "and not less to an inward prompting, which now grew daily upon me, that, by labor and intense study (which I take to be my portion in this life), I might perhaps leave something so written to after-times as they should not willingly let die." He was about to extend his travels into Sicily and Greece when the news of the civil commotions in England caused him to change his purpose; "for I thought it base," he says, "to be travelling for amusement abroad, while my fellow-citizens were fighting for liberty at home."

Not being called to serve the state in any official capacity on his arrival in London, he rented a spacious house in which he conducted a private school. He sought to exemplify, in some measure at least, his educational theories. He held that languages should be studied for the sake of the literary treasures they contain. He accordingly laid but little stress on minute verbal drill and sought to acquaint his pupils with what was best in classic literature. A long list of Latin and Greek authors was read. Besides, he attached much importance to religious instruction; and on Sunday he dictated to his pupils an outline of Protestant theology.

But this school has called forth some unfavorable criticism upon its founder. Dr. Johnson, who delights

in severe reflections, calls attention to the contrast between the lofty sentiment and small performance of the poet, who, "when he reaches the scene of action, vapors away his patriotism in a private boarding-school." The animadversion is unjust. Though modestly laboring as a teacher, Milton's talents and learning were sincerely devoted to the service of his country. He has himself given us what ought to be a satisfactory explanation. "Avoiding the labors of the camp," he says, "in which any robust soldier would have surpassed me, I betook myself to those weapons which I could wield with most effect; and I conceived that I was acting wisely when I thus brought my better and more valuable faculties, those which constituted my principal strength and consequence, to the assistance of my country and her honorable cause."

In 1641 he published his first work in prose, "Of Reformation in England, and the Causes that hitherto Have Hindered It." It is an attack upon the bishops and the Established Church. The same year appeared two other controversial works, "Of Prelatical Episcopacy," which he maintains is without warrant from apostolic times, and "The Reason of Church Government," which is an argument against prelacy. With these works Milton threw himself into the bitter controversies of the age. It was a matter, not of choice, but of duty. He felt called to add the weight of his learning and eloquence to the side of the Puritans, who were perhaps inferior to their prelatical opponents in scholarship. He tells us himself that he "was not disposed to this manner of writing, wherein knowing myself inferior to my-

self, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand."

In 1643, in his thirty-fifth year, Milton married Mary Powell, daughter of a justice of the peace in Oxfordshire. She was of Royalist family and had been brought up in the leisure and gayety of affluence. It is not strange, therefore, that she found the meagre fare and studious habits of her husband's home distasteful. After a month in this scholastic abode, she made a visit to her father's home, from which she refused to return. Her husband's letters were left unanswered, and his messenger was dismissed with contempt. Milton felt this breach of duty on her part very keenly, and resolved to repudiate his wife on the ground of disobedience and desertion.

In support of his course, he published in 1644 a treatise entitled, "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," and the year following his "Tetrachordon, or Expositions on the Four Chief Places of Scripture which treat of Marriage." He maintains "that indisposition, unfitness, or contrariety of mind, arising from a cause in nature unchangeable, hindering, and likely to hinder the main benefits of conjugal society, which are solace and peace," is a justifiable ground of divorce. As might be expected, he argued with great skill; but he was smarting at the time under a sense of personal humiliation and wrong, and it may be doubted whether he himself afterward approved of his extreme position. His views were bitterly assailed.

At last a reconciliation between him and his wife was effected. When one day she suddenly appeared before him, and on her knees begged his forgiveness, his generous impulses were deeply moved. He received her into his

home again, and ever afterward treated her with affection; and when her family, because of their Royalist sympathies, fell into distress, he generously extended his protection to her father and brothers. The incidents of this reconciliation are supposed to have given rise to a beautiful passage in "Paradise Lost," where Eve is described as humbly falling in tears and disordered tresses at the feet of Adam, and suing for pardon and peace. And then —

> "She ended, weeping; and her lowly plight,
> Immovable till peace obtain'd from fault
> Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
> Commiseration; soon his heart relented
> Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,
> Now at his feet submissive in distress;
> Creature so fair his reconcilement seeking,
> His counsel, whom she had displeased, his aid."

This same year, 1644, saw the publication of two other treatises that will long survive. The one is the "Areopagitica, or Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing," the other is his "Tractate on Education." In the latter he has set forth in brief compass his educational views and made many suggestions for the improvement of the current system. It has been pronounced Utopian in character, but it is to be noted that many educational reforms of recent years have been in the line indicated by Milton.

His definition of education, which has been often quoted, presents a beautiful ideal. "I call a complete and generous education," he says, "that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." But he does not

contemplate practical efficiency in the secular duties of life as the sole end of education. Its highest aim is character. "The end of learning is," he says, "to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection."

Languages are to be studied in order to learn the useful things embodied in the literatures of those peoples that have made the highest attainments in wisdom. "And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet if he have not studied the solid things in them, as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only."

He held that the subjects studied and the tasks imposed should be wisely adapted to the learner's age and progress; and he strongly denounces the "preposterous exaction" which forces "the empty wits of children to compose themes, verses, and orations, which are the acts of ripest judgment and the final work of a head filled by long reading and observing with elegant maxims and copious invention." The outline of studies he proposes includes nearly the whole circuit of learning — a curriculum of heroic mould. Milton himself seems to have been conscious of the vastness of his plan; and he concludes the "Tractate" with the remark, "That this is not a bow for every man to shoot in that counts himself a teacher, but will require sinews almost equal to those which Homer gave Ulysses."

Milton continued to live in private, giving his life to instructing his pupils and to discussing questions relating to the public weal. In 1649, two weeks after the execution of Charles I., he published his "Tenure of Kings and Magistrates," in which he undertook to prove that it is lawful, and has been held so in all ages, for any who have the power, to call to account a tyrant or wicked king, and, after due conviction, to depose and put him to death. This treatise marked a turning-point in his career. The Council of State of the new commonwealth, pleased with his courage and republicanism, called him to the secretaryship for foreign tongues. It became his duty to prepare the Latin letters which were addressed by the Council to foreign princes. Later he served as Cromwell's Latin Secretary — an office he held throughout the Protectorate.

His literary and controversial activity, however, did not cease in his official life. His "Eikonoklastes," or Image-breaker, was written in 1649, to counteract the influence of "Eikon Basilike," or Royal Image, a book that had an immense circulation and tended to create a reaction in public sentiment in favor of the monarchy. A still more important work was his Latin "Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio," which was written in reply to a treatise by Salmasius, a scholar of Leyden, in which an effort was made to vindicate the memory of Charles I. and to bring reproach upon the commonwealth. In spite of failing vision and the warning of his physicians, Milton threw himself with great ardor into his task, and in 1651 published his "Defensio," one of the most masterly controversial works ever written. He practically annihilated his

opponent. The commonwealth, it was said, owed its standing in Europe to Cromwell's battles and Milton's books.

During the Protectorate Milton's life was uneventful. He bore his blindness, which had now become total, with heroic fortitude, upheld by a beautiful faith, to which he gave expression in a sonnet "On his Blindness": —

> "God doth not need
> Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best
> Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
> Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
> And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
> They also serve who only stand and wait."

At the Restoration, though specially named for punishment, he somehow escaped the scaffold. His life, however, was for some years one of solitude and dejection. His own feelings are put into the mouth of his Samson: —

> "Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonored, quelled,
> To what can I be useful? Wherein serve
> My nation, and the work from heaven imposed?
> But to sit idle on the household hearth,
> A burdensome drone, to visitants a gaze,
> Or pitied object."

To add to his distress, his three daughters, whose rearing had been somewhat neglected, failed to prove a comfort to their father in his sore afflictions. They treated him with disrespect, sold his books by stealth, and rebelled against the drudgery of reading to him. Under these circumstances it is hardly to be wondered at that he allowed himself to be persuaded (his second wife having

died eight years before) into contracting a third marriage — a union that greatly added to the comfort and happiness of his last years.

But in all this period of trial, Milton had the solace of a noble task. He was slowly elaborating his "Paradise Lost," in which he realized the dream of his youth. Its main theme is indicated in the opening lines: —

> "Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
> Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
> Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
> With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
> Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
> Sing, heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
> Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire
> That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
> In the beginning, how the heavens and earth
> Rose out of chaos."

But the poem must be read before its grandeur can be appreciated. It is one of the world's great epics; and in majesty of plan and sublimity of treatment it surpasses them all. The Eternal Spirit, which he invokes, seems to have touched his lips with hallowed fire. The splendors of heaven, the horrors of hell, and the beauties of Paradise are depicted with matchless power. The beings of the unseen world — angels and demons — exercise before us their mighty agency; and in the council chambers of heaven we hear the words of the Almighty. The poem comprehends the universe, sets forth the truth of divine government, and exhibits life in its eternal significance — a poem that rises above the petty incidents of earth with monumental splendor. It met with appreciation from the start.

With a clear recognition of its worth, Dryden said, "This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too." Milton's modest house became a pilgrim's shrine, and men from every rank, not only from his native land, but also from abroad, came to pay him homage.

Milton's literary activity continued to the last, and enriched our literature with two other noble productions, "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes." The former may be regarded as a sequel to "Paradise Lost"; the latter is the most powerful drama in our language after the Greek model. The poet, unconsciously perhaps, identified himself with his Samson, and gave utterance to the profoundest emotions which had been awakened by the mighty conflicts and sorrows of his own life.

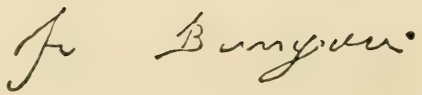
He died Nov. 8, 1674. He was a man of heroic mould. In his solitary grandeur only one man of his age deserves to be placed beside him — the great Protector, Oliver Cromwell. His greatness was austere. In his life he had no intimate and tender companionships; and now our feeling toward him is admiration rather than love. His character was without blemish, his aspirations pure and lofty, his courage undaunted, his intellectual vigor and power almost without parallel. But he was conscious of his greatness, and, finding ample resources within himself, he did not seek human sympathy. Wordsworth has spoken truly, —

"Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart."

Like his own "Paradise Lost," he appears, with his Titanic proportions and independent loneliness, as the most impressive figure in English literature.



Engraved by G. Zobel.



JOHN BUNYAN.

In scholarly culture never was a writer less fitted for authorship than Bunyan. He sprang from a very humble origin; his school training was exceedingly elementary; his associates were uneducated people; his reading was almost exclusively confined to three or four religious books. Yet, in spite of this meagre outfit in literary culture, he wrote a book that has become a classic. It is the greatest allegory ever written, and in graphic power of portraiture it is scarcely inferior to the creations of Shakespeare. What is the secret of this achievement? It is to be found, first, in the divine gift of genius, and, second, in the extraordinary depth of his varied religious experience. He wrote directly from the fulness of knowledge which he had gained through years of spiritual conflict.

In "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners," we have Bunyan's autobiography. As the title indicates, it is chiefly occupied with his religious trials and triumphs. In comparison with the supreme interest of religion, his Puritanic spirit deems the outward circumstances of life as little better than vanity. He was born at Elstow, a village near Bedford, in 1628. His father was a mender of pots and kettles — a trade to which he was himself brought up. At school he learned to read and write; but "to my shame," he says, "I confess I did soon lose that little I learnt, even almost utterly."

In childhood and youth he was singularly sensitive in matters of religion. Either in his home or at school the doctrines of Puritan theology had been impressed upon him. He believed himself the chief of sinners and has drawn a very dark picture of his youthful life. Though he probably exaggerated the degree of his wickedness, as some of his biographers have asserted, yet his particular statements form a grievous indictment. He had few equals, he tells us, "in cursing, swearing, lying, and blaspheming the holy name of God. . . . I was the very ringleader of all the youth that kept me company, in all manner of vice and ungodliness." Yet, in this vicious course of life, he was not thoroughly hardened. His conscience was continually troubling him by day, and frightful visions of evil spirits haunted him by night. When he discovered wickedness in those who professed godliness, it made him tremble. Throughout this youthful period, in spite of his iterated self-reproach, we discern the workings of an abnormally sensitive conscience, and of a restless, powerful imagination.

In speaking of this early period of his life, he notes with gratitude several special providences. He was twice saved from drowning, and was once preserved from the bite of an adder. In the Civil War he joined the Parliamentary army, and on one occasion, as he thought, narrowly escaped death. "When I was a soldier," to give his own account of the incident, "I, with others, was drawn out to go to such a place to besiege it; but when I was just ready to go, one of the company desired to go in my room: to which, when I had consented, he took my place; and coming to the siege, as he stood sentinel, he was shot in the head

with a musket bullet and died." These he called "judgments mixed with mercy."

He married a pious woman whose only dowry was "The Plain Man's Pathway to Heaven" and "The Practice of Piety." This, it must be confessed, was a slim outfit for housekeeping; but otherwise, he tells us, they did not have "so much household stuff as a dish or a spoon." They sometimes read together in these devotional works. "They did beget within me," he continues, "some desires to reform my vicious life, and fall in very eagerly with the religion of the times; to wit, to go to church twice a day, and that too with the foremost; and there very devotedly both say and sing, as others did, yet retaining my wicked life."

But he soon fell into a state of despair, believing that it was too late for him to repent and be forgiven. He resolved to go on in sin, and studied what forms of evil might yet be indulged in that he "might taste the sweetness of it." This continued for some weeks, when the severe reproof of a woman, herself a "loose and ungodly wretch," put him to shame. From that time forward he gave up the ugly habit of swearing, and to his surprise (though not to that of decent people) he found that he "could, without it, speak better, and with more pleasantness than ever before." He began to read the Scriptures, especially the historical portions, with interest; and his effort to keep its commandments led to an outward reformation of his life. His neighbors marvelled at the change in his conduct and took pains, both to his face and behind his back, to commend him as an honest and godly man.

While thus striving to live blamelessly in the eyes of those about him, he was still troubled. The conversation

of some pious women led him to realize that there was a spiritual experience — a peace and joy in God — of which he was still ignorant. He found difficulty in understanding and exercising faith. Besides, he was greatly distressed over the doctrine of election. He was continually asking himself: "How can you tell that you are elected? And what if you should not be? How then?" He longed for conversion. "Gold! could it have been gotten for gold, what would I have given for it! Had I had a whole world, it had all gone ten thousand times over for this, that my soul might have been in a converted state."

In his distress Bunyan sought counsel of the Rev. Mr. Gifford of Bedford, who performed for him the office of "Evangelist." He at last obtained a satisfying view of the love of God. "And with that," he tells us, "my heart was filled full of comfort and hope, and now I could believe that my sins would be forgiven me; yea, I was now so taken with the love and mercy of God that I remember I could not tell how to contain till I got home; I thought I could have spoken of his love, and have told of his mercy to me, even to the very crows that sat upon the ploughed lands before me, had they been capable to have understood me."

But his spiritual trials were by no means at an end. He had to fight with Apollyon; to pass through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Doubts assailed him; temptations to blasphemy beset him; he felt an almost irresistible impulse to commit the sin against the Holy Ghost; he looked upon himself as a second Judas. No other soul was ever more tormented. Yet at last he "was loosed from his afflictions and irons; his temptations fled away;" and

henceforth he was able to live in sight of the Celestial City.

He united with the Baptist congregation at Bedford. After a time his gifts as a speaker were discovered, and he was set apart as a preacher. He entered upon his office with great humility; and it was only after hundreds had flocked to hear him, and many had turned from sin to righteousness, that he became firmly established in his vocation. He always spoke from the depths of his own conviction; and because his religious experience had been extremely varied and profound, he spoke with unusual spiritual power. He often felt, to use his own words, "as if an angel of God had stood at his back to encourage him." Yet his path was not smooth. He was opposed by the established clergy; but instead of returning railing for railing, he sought a more exquisite vengeance by converting as many of "their carnal professors" as possible. He was vilely slandered; but instead of being troubled and cast down, he comforted himself with the words, "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven."

The sermons of Bunyan, a number of which have been preserved, are in keeping with the general style of preaching then in vogue. Compared with sermons of the present day, they are tediously long. They are designed to be comprehensive in treatment; and therefore, instead of leaving something to the intelligence of the hearer, they abound in the most obvious commonplaces. There is scarcely any end to the divisions and subdivisions. They

are more concerned with thought than style; and instead of rhetorical grace, we find only simplicity and directness. Their remarkable effectiveness was due to the intellectual vigor and moving earnestness of the speaker — a fact that emphasizes for us the importance of the personal element in public discourse.

After preaching five years with great success, he entered on a long period of tribulation. Charles II. had ascended the throne, and the Act of Uniformity, which had been suspended during the commonwealth, was again revived. The Dissenters' chapels were closed, and on Sundays the people were required to be present in the parish church. The Bedford Baptists refused to obey; and their church being closed, Bunyan continued to preach to them either in the woods or in private houses. But the officers of the law were on the watch; and it was not long till he was arrested on the charge of "devilishly and perniciously abstaining from coming to church to hear divine service, and of upholding unlawful meetings and conventicles." The judges were disposed to be lenient with him; but as he uncompromisingly refused to promise that he would abstain from preaching, he was, in 1660, cast into Bedford jail, where he remained for the next twelve years.

In this affair we see his moral earnestness. He preferred imprisonment, banishment, or even death itself to a sacrifice of principle. He might have escaped had he chosen to do so; but under the circumstances he felt that flight would have been cowardice. In the words of Froude, "He was the first Nonconformist who had been marked for arrest. If he flinched after he had been singled out by name, the whole body of his congregation

would be discouraged." His devotion to his family rendered his imprisonment a still greater trial. "The parting with my wife and poor children," he said, "hath often been to me, in this place, as the pulling the flesh from my bones; and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of these mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the many hardships, miseries, and wants that my poor family was likewise to meet with; especially my poor blind child, who lay nearer my heart than all I had beside."

His treatment in the jail has been a matter of dispute. A seventeenth-century jail was at the best a very undesirable place of abode. At times he was closely confined; but for the most part, it seems, he was allowed considerable freedom. For a brief space he was even permitted to visit his family. Not being able to carry on his trade as tinker, he learned to make tags for boot-laces as a means of supporting his family.

But how little do we understand, in many cases, what is best for us! The imprisonment of Bunyan developed his spiritual insight and resulted in his monumental allegory, "The Pilgrim's Progress." It was written at odd moments during his confinement, with no other books of reference than the Bible and Fox's "Book of Martyrs." The latter gave him some knowledge of history, and the former "is a literature in itself — the rarest and richest in all departments of thought or imagination which exists." There is a reference to his prison, strangely free from bitterness, in the opening sentence: "As I walked through the wilderness of this world, I lighted on a certain place where was a *den*, and laid me down in that place to sleep; and

as I slept I dreamed a dream." The work was not planned in advance, but grew under his hand, as he tells us in his introductory apology: —

> "When at the first I took my pen in hand
> Thus for to write, I did not understand
> That I at all should make a little book
> In such a mode; nay, I had undertook
> To make another; which, when almost done,
> Before I was aware, I this begun."

"The Pilgrim's Progress" describes a journey from the City of Destruction to the New Jerusalem; in other words, it sets forth the sorrows, joys, and final triumph of a Christian life. It is Bunyan's own experience in allegory. His faith and experience were back of it; and it stands, as Carlyle has remarked, the shadow of what, to its author, was an awful fact. Its descriptions are remarkably vivid; its characters are sharply defined; and what gives it perennial interest is its fidelity to life. Every earnest nature, no matter what may be the creed, there finds, more or less fully, its own experience. Who has not crossed the Slough of Despond? Who has not felt the burden of unworthiness, climbed the hill of Difficulty, and been shut up in Doubting Castle? Who has not also rested in the Delectable Mountains, or reached for moments, all too brief, the Land of Beulah?

Some of the scenes in "The Pilgrim's Progress" are realistic pictures of Bunyan's times. The trial of Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair is an unexaggerated reproduction of the judicial proceedings in England during the reign of Charles II. It contains touches from Bunyan's own trial. The hard, worldly-minded characters, with

which the book is filled, are types from contemporary life — men whom Bunyan had actually met. This fact gives the book a historic interest and value that are not generally understood.

"The Pilgrim's Progress" gradually made its way into popularity. In the course of a dozen years after its first appearance in 1678, it passed through many editions and was widely known not only on the Continent, but also in the English colonies of America. Since that time no other book, except the English Bible, has been so widely circulated. Not long after its first appearance, its authorship was questioned. There were some who denied that the ignorant tinker could have written it. To silence these gainsayers, Bunyan put forth the second part of the book, in which the pilgrimage of Christian's wife and children is described. There is doubtless comfort in the thought that they were not left behind; but Bunyan had at first worked the vein so thoroughly that the second part is necessarily lacking in freshness and interest. It was published in 1684.

Bunyan continued to work the rich vein he had discovered. His next work was the "Holy War," which takes very high rank as an allegory. "If 'The Pilgrim's Progress' did not exist," says Macaulay, "the 'Holy War' would be the best allegory that ever was written." It may not unjustly be described as a prose "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained" in a single work. It treats the same subject in very much the same way. It describes the conflict between Shaddai and Diabolus for the possession of the metropolis of the world, the "fair and delicate town called Mansoul." It is sacred history — the creation of

man, the fall, redemption, and the establishment of the kingdom of heaven — in the form of allegory.

In the "Holy War" Bunyan turned to good account his experience as a soldier, and many of the scenes are vividly conceived. The subject, however, does not lend itself readily to allegorical treatment, inasmuch as it lacks a definite dramatic conclusion. Notwithstanding the redemption of Mansoul, somehow "Diabolonians" still dwell within the walls and disturb the victory. No doubt there will sometime be a satisfactory *dénouement* to the tragic conflict, but it has not yet become a reality.

As a counterpart to Christian's pilgrimage, Bunyan has portrayed "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman." He drew, as before, upon his observation and experience. "Yea," he exclaims, "I think I may truly say that to the best of my remembrance all the things that here I discourse of, I mean as to matter of fact, have been acted upon the stage of the world, even many times before my eyes." The evil habits of Mr. Badman in his youth are precisely those which Bunyan ascribes to himself in his spiritual autobiography. "The Life and Death of Mr. Badman" is a realistic character sketch, which leads through Defoe to the great school of English novels.

Much has been written of Bunyan's style. It has been extravagantly lauded and contemptuously depreciated. Judged from an artificial literary point of view, he can hardly be said to have a style at all. He disdains the artifices of rhetoric. Deeply in earnest, he tells his story in a simple, direct, and often colloquial way. Yet, in its unadorned simplicity, it often rises to a high degree of beauty and force. He aimed, not at show, but effect.

"Words easy to be understood do often hit the mark," he says in defence of his homely diction, "when high and learned ones do only pierce the air. He also that speaks to the weakest, may make the learned understand him; when he that striveth to be high is not only for the most part understood but of a sort, but also many times is neither understood by them nor by himself."

Bunyan had the power of clear and vivid conception. Whether he describes a character, a landscape, or an event, it can be clearly imaged to the mind. This fact gives a picturesque quality to his work. His books lend themselves readily to illustration, and there are few pages in "The Pilgrim's Progress" or the "Holy War" that would not furnish subjects for an artist. Taken altogether, Macaulay's well-known commendation of Bunyan's style, though it has been censured for its "characteristic slapdash extravagance," is not very far out of the way: "The vocabulary is the vocabulary of the common people. There is not an expression, if we except a few technical terms of theology, which would puzzle the rudest peasant. We have observed several pages which do not contain a single word of more than two syllables. Yet no writer has said more exactly what he meant to say. For magnificence, for pathos, for vehement exhortations, for subtle disquisition, for every purpose of the poet, the orator, and the divine, this homely dialect, the dialect of the plain workingmen, was sufficient."

But little more remains to be said of Bunyan's life. He was released from prison in 1673 and at once took charge of the Baptist congregation at Bedford as pastor. His imprisonment, his writings, and his power as a

preacher had made him famous throughout England. Half in jest and half in earnest, people called him Bishop Bunyan. Apart from his writings, his life passed uneventfully in preaching and pastoral visitation. This was the happiest period of his life. In a measure it brought him compensation for his previous trials; for he habitually dwelt "in his own Land of Beulah, Doubting Castle out of sight, and the towers and minarets of Emmanuel Land growing nearer and clearer as the days went on." He frequently preached in London; and "if there was but one day's notice, the meeting-house was crowded to overflowing." Sometimes he had to be lifted to the pulpit stairs over the heads of the congregation. But his popularity never turned his head. When a friend once complimented him on "the sweet sermon" he had just delivered, he replied, "You need not remind me of that; the devil told me of it before I was out of the pulpit."

While Bunyan was intensely earnest, there is an absence of fanaticism in his teaching. His imprisonment did not lead him into a spirit of bitterness against the English government. In spite of the harshness of his beliefs, he cherished a gentle and tolerant spirit. In this respect he was far in advance of his age. Contrary to the usual practice of his denomination, he advocated communion with other Christians. To his mind sin was the great heresy; and against this, though indulgent to differences of creed, he was uniformly and zealously intolerant.

The last act of his life was a labor of love. He made a long journey on horseback to reconcile a father who had become alienated from his son. He successfully accomplished his mission; but on his return, he was drenched

with rain. When he reached the house of a friend in London, he was seized by a violent fever, and in ten days breathed his last. This was in August, 1688.

A contemporary who knew him well thus speaks of him: "He appeared in countenance to be of a stern and rough temper; but in his conversation, mild and affable, not given to loquacity or much discourse in company, unless some urgent occasion required it; observing never to boast of himself, or his parts, but rather seem low in his own eyes and submit himself to the judgment of others; abhorring lying and swearing, being just in all that lay in his power to his word; not seeming to revenge injuries, loving to reconcile differences, and make friendships with all. He had a sharp, quick eye, accomplished with an excellent discerning of persons, being of good judgment and quick wit."

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FIRST CRITICAL PERIOD.

PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

DIARISTS. — John Evelyn (1620–1706). Miscellaneous writer, but chiefly remembered for his "Diary."

Samuel Pepys (1633–1703). His "Diary" covers the period 1660–1669, first published in 1825.

PHILOSOPHERS. — Sir Isaac Newton (1642–1727). Author of several works, the chief of which is "Principia Philosophiæ Naturalis Mathematica" (1687).

Robert Boyle (1627–1691). A distinguished member of the Royal Society; "the most faithful, the most patient, the most successful disciple who carried forward the experimental philosophy of Bacon."

John Locke (1632–1704). Author of two "Treatises on Government" (1690), "Thoughts Concerning Education" (1693), "Essay on the Human Understanding" (1690), etc.

Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679). Author of "Human Nature" (1650), "Leviathan" (1651), "The Behemoth" (1678).

THEOLOGIANS. — Joseph Butler (1692–1752). Bishop of Durham, and author of "The Analogy of Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature" (1736).

Gilbert Burnet (1643–1715). Bishop of Salisbury, and author of the "History of the Reformation" (1681), "Life of Sir Matthew Hale" (1682), etc.

Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688). Author of "True Intellectual System of the Universe" (1678).

John Tillotson (1630–1694). Archbishop of Canterbury, author of "The Rule of Faith" (1666), and "Sermons."

Jeremy Collier (1650–1726). Nonconformist clergyman, and author of various works, of which the best known is "A Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the Stage" (1698). His vigorous attacks led to a purification of the theatre.

Novelists. — Daniel Defoe (1663–1731). Voluminous author, best known for his "Robinson Crusoe" (1719), "Moll Flanders" (1721), "Journal of the Plague" (1722), etc.

Samuel Richardson (1689–1761). First novelist of love, author of "Pamela" (1740), "Clarissa Harlowe" (1749), and "Sir Charles Grandison" (1754), written to exhibit an ideal hero.

Henry Fielding (1707–1754). Author of "Joseph Andrews" (1742), "Jonathan Wild" (1743), "Tom Jones" (1749), "Amelia" (1751), etc.

Dramatists. — William Wycherly (1640–1715). Best drama, "The Country Wife" (1675).

William Congreve (1670–1729). Principal piece, "Love for Love" (1695).

George Farquhar (1678–1707). Most popular work, "The Beaux's Stratagem" (1707).

Miscellaneous Prose. — Sir William Temple (1628–1699). Statesman, and author of "Ancient and Modern Learning" (1692).

Sir Richard Steele (1671–1729). Author of "The Christian Hero" (1701), several comedies, "The Funeral, or Grief à la Mode" (1702), "The Tender Husband" (1703), founder of the *Tatler*, and distinguished essayist.

Poets. — Samuel Butler (1612–1680). Author of "Hudibras" (1662–1678), a mock-heroic poem ridiculing the Puritans.

James Thomson (1700–1748). Author of "The Seasons" (1726–1730), several dramas, and "The Castle of Indolence" (1748), a polished poem in Spenserian verse.

Edward Young (1681–1765). Royal chaplain, and author of "The Love of Fame" (1725–1728), a series of satires, and "The Complaint, or Night Thoughts" (1742–1746), on which his fame chiefly rests.

GREAT REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

John Dryden. Alexander Pope.
Joseph Addison. Jonathan Swift.

V.

FIRST CRITICAL PERIOD.

(1660–1745.)

Puritan extreme — Reaction — French influence — Natural science — Transition — Greater toleration — Deism — Augustan Age — English influence — Social condition — Woman — Witchcraft — Rise of Methodism — Reading public — Clubs — Periodicals — Diarists, Evelyn and Pepys — John Locke — Steele — Rise of the novel — Defoe — Richardson — Fielding — Samuel Butler — James Thomson — Edward Young — JOHN DRYDEN — JOSEPH ADDISON — ALEXANDER POPE — JONATHAN SWIFT.

THIS period extends from the Restoration to the death of Pope and Swift. It was ushered in by a violent reaction.

With all its moral earnestness and love of freedom, Puritanism had degenerated into a false and forbidding asceticism. It condemned many innocent pleasures. It clothed morality and religion in a garb of cant. The claims of the physical and intellectual parts of man were, under the influence of a terrific theology, sacrificed to his spiritual interests. All spontaneous joy and gayety were banished from life. The Puritan's steps were slow; his face was elongated; his tone had a nasal quality. He gave his children names drawn from the Scriptures; and shutting his eyes to the beauties of the world about him, and forgetting the infinite love of God, he lived perpetually in the shadow of divine wrath. His religion, at war

with nature and the gospel, degenerated into fanaticism and weighed heavily upon the life of the English nation.

With the Restoration, Puritanism was overthrown. The Royalist party, with its sharp contrasts to Puritan principles, again came into power. The result in its moral effects was dreadful. The stream of license, which had been held in check for years, burst forth with fearful momentum. The reign of the flesh set in. Virtue was held to savor of Puritanism; duty was thought to smack of fanaticism; and integrity, patriotism, and honor were regarded as mere devices for self-aggrandizement. Under the lead of Charles II., himself a notorious libertine, the court became a scene of shameless and almost incredible debauchery. The effect upon literature can be easily imagined. It debased the moral tone of poetry and the drama to a shocking degree. As Dryden tells us in one of his epilogues: —

> "The poets who must live by courts, or starve,
> Were proud so good a government to serve;
> And, mixing with buffoons and pimps profane,
> Tainted the stage, for some small snip of gain."

But there are other respects in which the Restoration affected literature. Charles II. returned to England with French companions and French tastes. It was but natural, therefore, that English literature should be influenced by French models. It was the Augustan Age of literature in France. Louis XIV., the most powerful monarch in Europe, had gathered about him the best literary talent of the age. Corneille, Molière, and Racine gave great splendor to dramatic poetry, and Boileau developed the art of

criticism. But the French drama, besides following classical models in regard to the unities, imposed the burden of rhymed couplets upon dramatic composition. It was in obedience to the wish of Charles that rhyme was first introduced into the English drama. Through French influence the course of the drama, as it had been developed by the great Elizabethans, was seriously interrupted.

But in respect to literary criticism, the influence of France was more salutary. Boileau had displayed great critical acumen in estimating French authors, and had laid down correct principles by which to judge literary composition. The art of criticism took root in England. Dryden, whom Johnson calls the father of English criticism, sat at the feet of his great French contemporary, and in his numerous prefaces exhibited admirable judgment in weighing the productions both of ancient and modern times.

Pope, the greatest writer of the period, likewise followed French models. The characteristics of the new criticism, which gradually fashioned a corresponding literature, were clearness, simplicity, and good sense.

The Restoration gave a new impulse to natural science. Charles II. was himself something of a chemist, and even the profligate Buckingham varied his debaucheries with experiments in his laboratory. In 1662 the Royal Society was founded, and for half a century inventions and discoveries in science followed one another in rapid succession. The national observatory at Greenwich was established. The spirit of investigation showed great vigor. Halley studied the tides, comets, and terrestrial magnetism. Boyle improved the air-pump and founded experimental chemistry. Mineralogy, zoölogy, and botany either had their

beginning or made noteworthy progress at this time. It was the age of Sir Isaac Newton.

But this period was one of ferment and transition. Old faiths in politics, philosophy, and religion were being cast aside. Tradition and custom were summoned before the bar of reason. "From the moment of the Restoration," says Green, "we find ourselves all at once among the great currents of thought and activity which have gone on widening and deepening from that time to this. The England around us becomes our England, an England whose chief forces are industry and science, the love of popular freedom and of law; an England which presses steadily forward to a larger social justice and equality, and which tends more and more to bring every custom and tradition, religious, intellectual, and political, to the test of pure reason." The belief in the divine right of kings became a thing of the past. With the Revolution of 1688, which placed William of Orange on the throne, the prolonged conflict between the people and the king came to an end. The executive supremacy was transferred from the crown to the House of Commons.

During the latter part of this period the three great religious parties — Anglicans, Dissenters, and Roman Catholics — grew somewhat more tolerant. The severity of the law was in a measure relaxed.

Within the Church of England there arose a class of divines who, because of their tolerant views, were stigmatized as "latitudinarians." Avoiding the scholasticism of the preceding age, they studied Scripture with a genial spirit. The evils of strife, as well as a sense of danger from infidelity, made them desire Christian unity, which

they recognized as the normal condition of the church. Among the most distinguished of these broad churchmen were Ralph Cudworth, Henry More, and John Tillotson.

A still more important movement in theology was the rise of Deism, which owed its prevalence to several cooperative causes. As we have seen, there was a general tendency to break away from the restraints of authority in every department of thought. The divisions and animosities of the church tended to unsettle the faith of many in the teachings of Christianity. And above all, perhaps, the license of the age sought to emancipate itself from the restraints of divine law.

In its progress Deism showed a rapid declension. It began with Lord Herbert of Cherbury, who reduced religion to five points: 1, that there is a God; 2, that he is to be worshipped; 3, that piety and virtue are the principal parts of this worship; 4, that men should repent and forsake sin; and 5, that good will be rewarded and sin punished. This scheme of doctrine represents Deism at its best. The writings of the deists, among whom may be mentioned Hobbes, Blount, and Lord Bolingbroke, naturally called forth many replies. The controversy, which was protracted far into the eighteenth century, was conducted with great ability on both sides. Among the defenders of Christianity, with whom ultimately remained the victory, were Cudworth, John Locke the philosopher, and Joseph Butler, the author of the famous "Analogy."

About the time Queen Anne ascended the English throne in 1702, English literature, under the moulding influence from France, began to assume a more elegant form. The

first half of the eighteenth century has sometimes been characterized as the *Augustan Age*. It has been thought, not without some reason, to resemble the flourishing period of Roman literature under Augustus, when Ovid, Horace, Cicero, and Virgil produced their immortal works. The names of Addison, Pope, and Swift are not unworthy to be placed side by side with the proudest names in the literature of Rome.

In this period the political principles of the Revolution became predominant. Absolutism gave place to constitutional government. The Tories and the Whigs became well-marked parties and in turn succeeded to the government. Corrupt political methods were frequently resorted to in order to gain party ascendency. Walpole boasted that every man had his price. An unselfish patriotism was too often looked on as youthful enthusiasm, which the coolness of age would cure. Leading statesmen led impure and dissipated lives.

Yet in spite of these conditions, England attained to great influence in continental affairs. Victory attended her arms on the Continent under the leadership of Marlborough. The battles of Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet brought the power of Louis XIV. to the verge of destruction. The balance of power was restored to Europe. The union of England and Scotland was effected in 1707, and English sovereigns henceforth reigned over the kingdom of *Great Britain*. The power of English thought, as well as of English arms, was felt abroad. Buffon found inspiration in its science; Montesquieu studied the institutions of England with great care; and Rousseau borrowed many of his thoughts from Locke.

The English people once more became conscious of their strength, and felt the uplifting power of great hopes and splendid purposes.

In several particulars the state of society does not present a pleasing picture. Education was confined to a comparatively limited circle. Addison complained that there were families in which not a single person could spell, "unless it be by chance the butler or one of the footmen." Cock-fighting was the favorite sport of schoolboys, and bull-baiting twice a week delighted the populace of London. The theatres were not yet fully redeemed from the licentiousness of the preceding period. Gambling was a common vice; and, what appears strange to us, the women of the time showed a strong passion for this excitement. Speaking of Will's Coffee-house, the *Tatler* says: "This place is very much altered since Mr. Dryden frequented it. Where you used to see songs, epigrams, and satires in the hands of every one you met, you have now only a pack of cards." Fashionable hours became later, and a considerable part of the night was frequently given to dissipation. Drunkenness increased with the introduction of gin. The police was not able to control the lawless classes, and in the cities mobs not infrequently vented their rage in conflagration and pillage. When Sir Roger de Coverley, as portrayed by Addison, went to the theatre, he armed his servants with cudgels for protection.

Woman had not yet found her true sphere; and, in wealthy or fashionable circles, her time was devoted chiefly to dress, frivolity, and scandal. In the "Rape of the Lock" Pope gives us a glimpse of conversation in court circles: —

"In various talk th' instructive hours they pass'd,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last;
One speaks the glory of the British queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen;
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes;
At every word a reputation dies;
Snuff, or the fan, supplies each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that."

Belief in witchcraft had not entirely passed away. In 1712 a witch was condemned to death; and her prosecution was conducted, not by ignorant rustics, but by a learned author and an educated clergyman. It is in keeping with the belief of the time to find Sir Roger de Coverley puzzled over the character of Moll White and piously advising her "to avoid all communication with the devil, and never to hurt any of her neighbor's cattle." Superstition was common, and people of every class had faith in omens. Religion was at a low ebb. Scepticism was extensively prevalent, especially among the higher classes, and many of the clergy thought more of the pleasures of the chase than of the care of souls. "Every one laughs," said Montesquieu, "if one talks of religion."

But there is also a more favorable side to the social condition of England during this period — some influences that contain the promise of a brighter day. In spite of the low state of Christianity, earnest men, like Doddridge, Watts, and William Law, were not wanting to inculcate a genuine piety. The rise of Methodism under John Wesley and George Whitefield exerted a salutary influence upon the religious life of England. These great preachers, impressed by the realities of sin, redemption, and eternal life,

urged these truths with surpassing eloquence upon the multitudes that flocked to hear them. Before the death of John Wesley his followers numbered a hundred thousand, and the Established Church was awakened to a new zeal.

The great middle class of England came into greater prominence and gradually formed a reading public. Literature became independent of patronage. It did not pretend to deal with the great problems of human thought, but as a rule confined itself to criticism, satire, wit, the minor morals, and the small proprieties of life. But through French and classic influences, these subjects were treated with a lightness of touch and elegance of form that have never been surpassed.

The clubs became an important feature of social life in London. Coffee-houses multiplied, till in 1708 they reached the number of three thousand. They became centres for the diffusion of intelligence. Here the leading political, literary, and social questions of the day were discussed.

Periodical publications became an important factor in the intellectual life of England. In 1714 no fewer than fourteen papers were published in London. The principal periodicals were the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and *Guardian*, which were conducted in a manner not only to refine the taste, but also to improve the morals. Made up of brief, entertaining, and often elegant essays, and treating of every subject from epic poems to female toilets, they came to be welcomed at the club-house and breakfast-table, and exerted a wide and salutary influence upon the thought and life of the country.

Before entering upon a consideration of the great repre-

sentative writers of this period, there are a few others that deserve mention. John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys were two diarists, who have earned the thanks of posterity for the minute glimpses they give of the manners of the time. They both occupied high positions; and their daily entries furnish us small details, not only of much interest, but of historic value. As their diaries were not intended for publication, they present unvarnished and often unflattering facts. The luxury, gambling, and licentiousness of the court of Charles II. are disclosed in the plainest terms. The following extract from Pepys, who was far from a model character, gives an idea of the amusements of the time: "Dec. 21. To Shoe Lane to see a cock-fight at a new pit there, a spot I never was at in my life; but, Lord! to see the strange variety of people, from parliament men, to the poorest 'prentices, bakers, brewers, butchers, draymen and what not, and all these fellows one with another cursing and betting. I soon had enough of it."

One of the greatest of all English philosophers was John Locke. He superintended the education of the Earl of Shaftesbury's son — an experience which developed the independent views contained in "Some Thoughts Concerning Education." His educational ideal was "a sound mind in a sound body," and he strongly inveighed against the unpractical character of the system then in vogue. He deservedly ranks among educational reformers. In 1689 he published a "Letter on Toleration" (afterward followed by several others), in which he maintained that charity, meekness, and good-will toward all mankind rather than zeal for dogma and ceremonies were the true marks

of Christian character. The work, however, through which he has exerted the greatest influence is his "Essay Concerning the Human Understanding" — a profound treatise that marks an epoch in the history of philosophy. Its object, as explained in the introduction, was "to inquire into the origin, certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent."

Sir Richard Steele, the friend of Addison, led a somewhat wayward life. He left Oxford without taking his degree, and enlisted in the Horse Guards — an imprudence that cost him an inheritance. He rose to the rank of captain, but was gay, reckless, and dissipated. His naturally tender heart was constantly overcome by his imperious appetites, and his life presents a series of alternate repentance and dissipation. In 1701 he wrote the "Christian Hero," for the purpose of impressing the principles of virtue upon his own heart. Though it is filled with lofty sentiment, it remained without serious effect upon the author's life. Then followed in annual succession several moderate comedies. At length appointed Gazetteer, a position that gave him a monopoly of official news, he began the *Tatler*, called Addison to his aid, and was eclipsed by his coadjutor.

It was during this period that the modern novel had its origin. Before the middle of the eighteenth century, several works of fiction were produced that have gained a permanent place in our literature. Avoiding the highly colored and extravagant elements of Elizabethan romance, they portray the scenes and characters of everyday life. The founder of the English novel was Daniel Defoe, a

varied and prolific writer, who in some of his views was in advance of his age. In 1698 he published an "Essay on Projects," in which he advocated the establishment of insurance companies, savings banks for the poor, and colleges for women. "A woman well-bred and well-taught," he said, "furnished with the additional accomplishments of knowledge and behavior, is a creature without comparison." His "True-born Englishman," a poetical satire in defence of King William, appeared in 1701, and eighty thousand copies were sold on the streets of London. What it lacks in poetry it makes up in homely vigor. The opening lines are well known:—

> "Wherever God erects a house of prayer,
> The devil always builds a chapel there;
> And 'twill be found upon examination,
> The latter has the largest congregation."

Defoe's "Robinson Crusoe" appeared in 1619 and instantly became popular. Few other English books have been more widely read. "Nobody," said Johnson, "ever laid it down without wishing it longer." It was suggested by the real experience of Alexander Selkirk, and describes the life and adventures of Robinson Crusoe, who lived for twenty-eight years on an uninhabited island off the coast of South America. Encouraged by the success of "Robinson Crusoe," the author wrote other fictitious narratives, among which are "Moll Flanders," "Captain Singleton," and the "History of the Great Plague." All possess the charm of simplicity of style and air of truth.

Samuel Richardson deserves to be considered the first great English novelist. At first a printer, he stumbled, at

the age of fifty, on the literary work that was to make him famous. It was suggested to him that he should prepare "a little volume of letters, in common style, on such subjects as might be of use to those country readers who were unable to indite for themselves." In undertaking the work, the happy thought occurred to him to embody in a series of letters an interesting story he had heard from a friend years before. The result was his first novel "Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded." Judged by present standards, the work is prolix and tedious; but when it appeared in 1740, it was something new and had a widespread popularity. It was followed a few years later by "Clarissa Harlowe," by common consent Richardson's masterpiece. "This work raised the fame of its author to its height," said Sir Walter Scott, "and no work had appeared before, perhaps none has appeared *since*, containing such direct appeals to the passions in a manner so irresistible."

Henry Fielding — lawyer, journalist, dramatist — had abundant opportunity to observe the varied phases of English life. With abounding vitality and humor, he described men as he saw them. He was an eighteenth-century realist. The scenes he presents are often coarse and low; but these faults are to be imputed less to the painter than to the age he describes. When "Pamela" appeared in 1740, Fielding did not sympathize with what he regarded as its ostentatious morality and excessive sentimentalism. He conceived the idea of a caricature; and, accordingly, in 1742, he produced his "Joseph Andrews." It abounded in humor, exuberant feeling, and overflowing benevolence, and was received with scarcely less favor than the work it was designed to ridicule.

In 1749, in the full maturity of his powers, Fielding published his ablest work, "Tom Jones." The scene of the story is laid partly in the country, and partly in the city, and taken altogether the work may be regarded as an epic of English life. The characters have a singular reality. It is framed on a large scale and introduces a great many types of character. In its personages, manners, amusements, tone of thought, and forms of expression, it introduces us better than any history to the England of a century and a half ago. The author claimed superiority over professed historians. "In their productions," he declared, "nothing is true but the names and dates, whereas in mine everything is true but the names and dates." The style of "Tom Jones," as in all Fielding's novels, is excellent; and what gives the book a peculiar charm, is the disinterested, genial spirit — a little too indulgent, perhaps, to the weakness of our nature — with which he seems to look on the scenes he portrays.

Among the secondary poets to be mentioned, the first in time, as also in popularity, was Samuel Butler, who gave expression to the great anti-Puritanic reaction of the Restoration. His "Hudibras," the first part of which appeared in 1662, is a humorous satire against the Puritans, and in its day was exceedingly popular. Of Charles II. it was said that —

> "He never ate, nor drank, nor slept,
> But Hudibras still near him kept."

The hero of the satire is a Puritan justice of the peace, who, with his servant Ralph, sallied forth, like another Don Quixote, to put an end to the amusements and follies of the people. Of course he came to grief. But the interest of

the poem is not in the story, but in its humorous descriptions and electric flashes of wit. Few other books have been oftener quoted. Here is a description of Sir Hudibras:—

"He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skilled in analytic;
He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;
On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute."

The following are well-known couplets:—

"For all a rhetorician's rules
Teach nothing but to name his tools."

"He that complies against his will,
Is of the same opinion still."

"And, like a lobster boiled, the morn
From black to red began to turn."

"Compound for sins they are inclined to,
By damning those they have no mind to."

James Thomson has been justly called the poet of nature. His "Seasons," which appeared between 1726 and 1730, possessed the charm of novelty. "The fresh treatment of a simple theme," to use the words of Professor Minto, "the warm poetical coloring of commonplace incidents, the freedom and irregularity of the plan, the boldness of the descriptions, the manly and sincere sentiment, the rough vigor of the verse, took by surprise a generation accustomed to witty satire and burlesque, refined diction, translations from the classics, themes valued in proportion to their remoteness from vulgar life." Thomson looked upon nature with a poet's eyes. If he learned from books,

he learned also from observation. There is truth in the lines describing his poetical life: —

> "I solitary court
> The inspiring breeze, and meditate the book
> Of Nature, ever open; aiming thence,
> Warm from the heart, to pour the moral song."

His descriptions are wonderfully accurate, vivid, picturesque. There is no phase of the various forms of earth and sky too delicate to escape his minute observation. There is great dignity and beauty, for example, in his description of sunrise: —

> "But yonder comes the powerful King of Day,
> Rejoicing in the east. The lessening cloud,
> The kindling azure, and the mountain's brow
> Illumed with fluid gold, his near approach
> Betoken glad. Lo! now, apparent all,
> Aslant the dew-bright earth and colored air,
> He looks in boundless majesty abroad,
> And sheds the shining day, that burnished plays
> On rocks, and hills, and towers, and wandering streams,
> High gleaming from afar."

His "Castle of Indolence," written in the Spenserian stanza, is polished to great correctness of form; but, in spite of its excellence, it has never been very popular.

The poetry and the life of Edward Young present a painful contrast. In his poems he assumes the rôle of a high religious moralist; but in his life he was an obsequious courtier and persistent place-seeker. It was a great disappointment to him that George II., to whom he addressed a poem containing the following lines, took him at his word: —

"O may I steal
Along the vale
Of humble life, secure from foes!
My friend sincere,
My judgment clear,
And gentle business my repose."

Among his numerous books there are two that are not unworthy of mention. "The Love of Fame" is a series of satires concluded in 1728. The love of praise is presented as a universal passion. The Duke of Grafton was so pleased with the poem that he presented the author two thousand pounds. "What!" remonstrated one of the Duke's friends, "two thousand pounds for a poem!" "Yes," replied his Grace, "and it is the best bargain I ever made in my life, for the poem is worth four thousand." The poem begins: —

"The love of praise, howe'er concealed by art,
Reigns more or less, and glows in every heart;
The proud, to gain it, toils on toils endure;
The modest shun it, but to make it sure."

The chief work entitling Young to a place in the annals of English literature is his "Night Thoughts." It was inspired by a triple bereavement that overwhelmed the poet with sorrow. "It differs," as he tells us, "from the common mode of poetry, which is, from long narratives to draw short morals; here, on the contrary, the narrative is short, and the morality arising from it makes the bulk of the poem. The reason of it is that the facts mentioned did naturally pour these reflections on the thoughts of the writer." The poem embodies a sombre, ascetic view of life. Its style is characterized by short, exclamatory

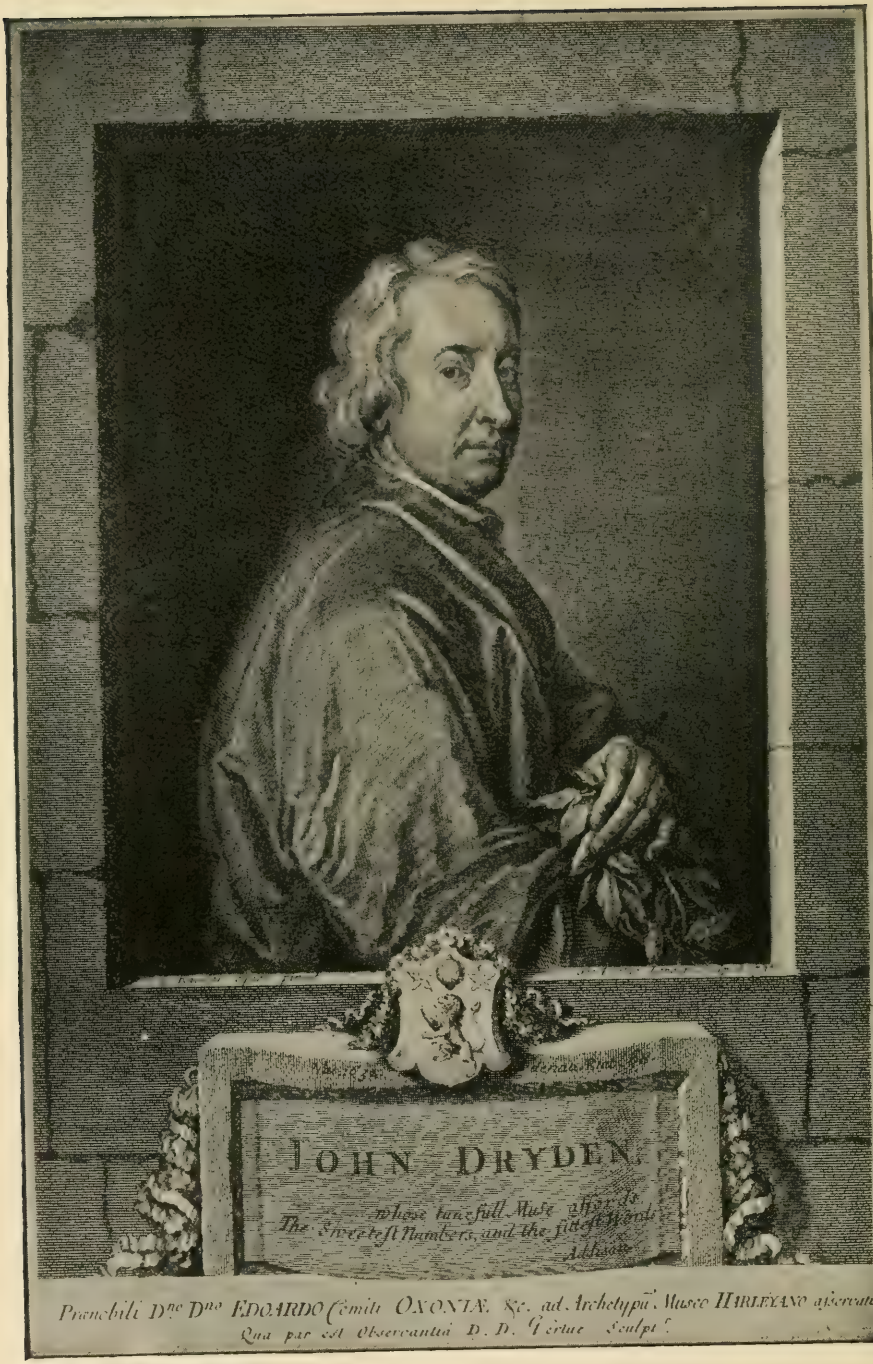
utterances, the suggestiveness of which is often quite effective. The opening lines, which are often referred to, are as follows: —

> "Tired Nature's sweet restorer, balmy Sleep!
> He, like the world, his ready visit pays,
> Where Fortune smiles; the wretched he forsakes;
> Swift on his downy pinion flies from woe,
> And lights on lids unsullied by a tear."

Young's works abound in brief sententious sayings, and he rivals Shakespeare and Pope in the number of proverbial expressions that have passed into current use. A few will serve for illustration: —

> "'Tis impious in a good man to be sad."
>
> "'Tis vain to seek in men for more than man."
>
> "Pygmies are pygmies still, though perched on Alps."
>
> "Death loves a shining mark, a signal blow."
>
> "The man that blushes is not quite a brute."
>
> "Earth's highest station ends in 'Here he lies;'
> And 'dust to dust' concludes the noblest song."

The mind that coined these and many similar expressions was endowed with no ordinary gifts.



Engraved by Vertue in 1730.

Jon: Dryden.

JOHN DRYDEN.

One of the greatest names in the literature of this period is John Dryden. He does not deserve, indeed, to stand by the side of Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, or Milton; but after these great names he comes at the head of the second rank. It was the fault of his age that he was not greater. No man can wholly detach himself from the influences by which he is surrounded; and Dryden came on the stage when a false taste prevailed, and when licentiousness gave moral tone to poetry. Living in the midst of burning religious and political questions, he was drawn into the vortex of controversy. He was always a partisan in some religious or political issue of the day. While this fact has given us some of the best satirical and didactic poems in our language, it did not contribute, perhaps, to the largest development of his poetical powers.

His aims were not high enough. "I confess," he said, "my chief endeavors are to delight the age in which I live. If the humor of this be for low comedy, small accidents, and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it." This was a voluntary degrading of his genius and an intentional renouncing of the artistic spirit. Guided by such motives, it was impossible for him to attain the highest results. If, like Milton, he had concentrated all the energies of his strong nature on an epic poem, as he once contemplated, or on poetry as an art, his work would no

doubt have been less faulty. But, taking him as he was, we cannot help admiring his genius, which created for him a distinct place in English literature.

Dryden was born of good family in Northamptonshire in 1631. Both on his father's and his mother's side his ancestry was Puritan and republican. He was educated at Westminster school, under the famous Dr. Busby. A schoolboy poem on the death of Lord Hastings had the distinction, and we may add the misfortune, of being published in connection with several other elegies called forth by the same event. Some of its conceits are exceedingly ridiculous. The young nobleman had died of the small-pox, and Dryden exclaims: —

> "Was there no milder way than the small-pox,
> The very filthiness of Pandora's box?"

Of the pustules he says: —

> "Each little pimple had a tear in it,
> To wail the fault its rising did commit."

And as the climax of this absurdity: —

> "No comet need foretell his change drew on,
> Whose corpse might seem a constellation."

Dryden's genius was slow in maturing, and much of his early work failed to give promise of his future eminence.

He entered Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1650, and took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1654. No details of his college life have come down to us, except his punishment on one occasion for "disobedience to the vice-master, and contumacy in taking his punishment, inflicted by him." In 1654, by the death of his father, he came

into the possession of a small estate worth about sixty pounds a year. After leaving Cambridge, for which he entertained no great affection, he went to London, and served for a time as secretary to his cousin, Sir Gilbert Pickering, a favorite of Cromwell.

In 1658 he composed "Heroic Stanzas" on the death of Oliver Cromwell, which caused him to be spoken of as a rising poet. Though disfigured here and there by conceits, it is, upon the whole, a strong, manly poem, showing a just appreciation of the great Protector's life. His next effort does not reflect credit on his character. It was the "Astræa Redux," written "on the happy restoration and return of his sacred Majesty, Charles II." After his eulogy of Cromwell two years before, we are hardly prepared for such lines as these: —

> "For his long absence Church and State did groan;
> Madness the pulpit, faction seized the throne:
> Experienced age in deep despair was lost,
> To see the rebel thrive, the loyal cross'd."

In 1663 he began to write for the stage. Instead of seeking to elevate public morals, or to attain perfection in art, it is to the lasting discredit of Dryden that he pandered to the vicious taste of the time. His first play, "The Wild Gallant," was not successful; and Pepys, in his "Diary," pronounced it "so poor a thing as ever I saw in my life." Without following him through the vicissitudes of his dramatic career, it is enough to say that he wrote in all twenty-eight comedies and tragedies, and at length established his position as the first dramatist of his time. For a long time he followed French models, but at last came to recognize and professedly to imitate the "divine Shakespeare." In

his comedies, as he tells us, he copied "the gallantries of the court." When in later years Jeremy Collier severely attacked the immoralities of the stage, Dryden, unlike several of his fellow-dramatists who attempted a reply, pleaded guilty, and retracted all thoughts and expressions that could be fairly charged with "obscenity, profaneness, or immorality."

In his tragedies he imitated the heroic style of Corneille. They contain much splendid declamation, which too often degenerates into bombast. But frequently he reaches the height of genuine poetry. Only a poet could have written these lines: —

"Something like
That voice, methinks, I should have somewhere heard;
But floods of woe have hurried it far off
Beyond my ken of soul."

Or these: —

"I feel death rising higher still and higher
Within my bosom; every breath I fetch
Shuts up my life within a shorter compass,
And, like the vanishing sound of bells, grows less
And less each pulse, till it be lost in air."

When he moralizes, he is often admirable: —

"The gods are just,
But how can finite measure infinite?
Reason! alas, it does not know itself!
Yet man, vain man, would with his short-lined plummet
Fathom the vast abyss of heavenly justice.
Whatever is, is in its causes just,
Since all things are by fate. But purblind man
Sees but a part o' th' chain, the nearest links,
His eyes not carrying to that equal beam
That poises all above."

But the drama was not Dryden's sphere. In his mind the judgment had the ascendency over the imagination. He was strongest in analyzing, arguing, criticising. He was a master of satire — not indeed of that species which slovenly butchers a man, to use his own comparison, but rather of that species which has "the fineness of stroke to separate the head from the body and leave it standing in its place." We shall say nothing of his "Annus Mirabilis," a long poem on the Dutch war and the London fire, except that it contains some of his manliest lines. It is not easy to surpass: —

"Silent in smoke of cannon they come on;"

"And his loud guns speak thick, like angry men;"

"The vigorous seaman every port-hole plies,
And adds his heart to every gun he fires."

In 1681 appeared the famous satire, "Absalom and Achitophel," the object of which was to bring discredit on the Earl of Shaftesbury and his adherents, who were seeking to secure the succession to the throne for the Duke of Monmouth, Charles's eldest son. It has been called the best political satire ever written. There is no effort at playful and delicate art; the poem was composed in earnest, and it abounds in hard, sweeping, stunning blows. It was eagerly seized upon by the public, and in a year no fewer than nine editions were called for. The Earl of Shaftesbury figures as Achitophel: —

"A name to all succeeding ages curst:
For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;

Restless, unfix'd in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace:
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pygmy-body to decay,
And o'er-inform'd the tenement of clay;
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high,
He sought the storms; but for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit."

The Duke of Buckingham is Zimri, whose character is outlined with astonishing power: —

"A man so various, that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome:
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;
Was everything by starts, and nothing long:
But in the course of one revolving moon,
Was Chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon:
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Bless'd madman, who could every hour employ,
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both, to show his judgment, in extremes."

In 1682 appeared the "Religio Laici." As an exposition of a layman's faith it was probably an honest presentation of Dryden's beliefs at the time. Whether intended to serve a political purpose or not, is a matter of dispute; but it attacks the Papists and at the same time declares the "Fanatics," by whom are meant the Nonconformists, still more dangerous — a declaration that accorded well with Charles's policy of persecution. It is entirely didactic in character and deservedly ranks as one

of the very best poems of its class in English. Though it is closely argumentative throughout, it still contains passages of much beauty. The opening lines are justly admired: —

> "Dim as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
> To lonely, weary, wandering travellers
> Is Reason to the soul: and as on high
> Those rolling fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
> Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upward to a better day.
> And as those nightly tapers disappear
> When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
> So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
> So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light."

In the preface to the poem Dryden has given us the ideal of style at which he aimed, and which he largely realized: "If any one be so lamentable a critic as to require the smoothness, the numbers, and the turn of heroic poetry in this poem, I must tell him that, if he has not read Horace, I have studied him and hope the style of his Epistles is not ill imitated here. The expressions of a poem designed purely for instruction ought to be plain and natural, and yet majestic; for here the poet is presumed to be a kind of lawgiver, and those three qualities which I have named are proper to the legislative style. The florid, elevated, and figurative way is for the passions; for love and hatred, fear and anger, are begotten in the soul by showing their objects out of their true proportion, either greater than the life or less; but instruction is to be given by showing them what they naturally are. A man is to be cheated into passion, but to be reasoned into truth."

In 1683 appeared a translation of Boileau's "L'Art Poétique." Though at first translated by a friend, Dryden's revisal made it practically his own. It is of interest, not only as showing the direct influence of French masters, but as setting forth the principles that underlay Dryden's later work and the poetry of the earlier half of the eighteenth century. Reason largely takes the place of imagination. Thus: —

> "Whate'er you write of pleasant or sublime,
> Always let sense accompany your rhyme;
> Falsely they seem each other to oppose;
> Rhyme must be made with reason's laws to close."

And in regard to diction: —

> "Observe the language well in all you write,
> And swerve not from it in your loftiest flight.
> The smoothest verse and the exactest sense
> Displease us, if ill English give offence.
> Take time for thinking; never work in haste;
> And value not yourself for writing fast."

On the accession of James, in 1685, Dryden became a Roman Catholic. This conversion has given rise to considerable discussion. Did it result from conviction or from self-interest? It is impossible to determine. But, in the moderate language of Johnson, "That conversion will always be suspected that apparently concurs with interest. He that never finds his error till it hinders his progress toward wealth or honor, will not be thought to love truth only for herself. Yet it may easily happen that information may come at a commodious time, and as truth and interest are not by any fatal necessity at vari-

ance, that one may by accident introduce the other. When opinions are struggling into popularity, the arguments by which they are opposed or defended become more known, and he that changes his profession would perhaps have changed it before, with the like opportunities of instruction. This was then the state of popery; every artifice was used to show it in its fairest form; and it must be owned to be a religion of external appearance sufficiently attractive."

As a result of this conversion we have the "Hind and Panther," a poem of twenty-five hundred lines, which is devoted to the defence of the Roman Church. This church is represented by the "milk-white hind," and the Church of England by the panther, a beautiful but spotted animal. Published at a time of heated religious controversy, it had a wide circulation. It was regarded by Pope as the most correct specimen of Dryden's versification; and there can be no doubt that the author, knowing it would be criticised with the most unfriendly rigor, elaborated it with unusual care. The opening lines are beautiful: —

> "A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchanged,
> Fed on the lawns, and in the forest ranged;
> Without unspotted, innocent within,
> She feared no danger, for she knew no sin.
> Yet hath she oft been chased with horns and hounds
> And Scythian shafts, and many winged wounds
> Aimed at her heart; was often forced to fly,
> And doomed to death, though fated not to die."

At the Revolution Dryden did not abjure his faith, and, as a consequence, lost his office as poet laureate.

In addition to the loss of his pension, which he could ill afford to suffer, he had the chagrin of seeing his rival, Shadwell, elevated to his place. Against him he wrote at this time one of his keenest satires, entitled "Mac Flecknoe." Flecknoe, who had governed long, and —

> "In prose and verse was owned, without dispute,
> Through all the realms of Nonsense, absolute,"

at length decides to settle the succession of the state, —

> "And, pondering, which of all his sons was fit
> To reign, and wage immortal war with wit,
> Cried, 'Tis resolved; for nature pleads, that he
> Should only rule, who most resembles me.
> Shadwell alone my perfect image bears,
> Mature in dulness from his tender years:
> Shadwell alone, of all my sons, is he,
> Who stands confirmed in full stupidity.
> The rest to some faint meaning make pretence,
> But Shadwell never deviates into sense.'"

Once more thrown upon his pen for support, Dryden turned to the stage, but chiefly to translation. In 1693 he published a volume of miscellanies, which contained translations from Homer and Ovid; and a little later appeared the satires of Juvenal and Persius. His theory of translation, as set forth in his prefaces, is better than his practice. He takes liberties with his author; and, as was the case with him in all his writings, he is far from painstaking. Besides, instead of mitigating, he magnified their obscenity. But, upon the whole, the translations are of high excellence. The most important of his translations was that of Virgil's "Æneid," on which he

labored three years. The public expectation was great, and it was not disappointed. Pope pronounced it "the most noble and spirited translation that I know in any language."

Its form may be seen from the opening lines: —

> "Arms, and the man I sing, who, forced by fate
> And haughty Juno's unrelenting hate,
> Expelled and exiled, left the Trojan shore.
> Long labors, both by sea and land, he bore,
> And in the doubtful war, before he won
> The Latin realm, and built the destined town,
> His banished gods restored to rites divine,
> And settled sure succession in his line,
> From whence the race of Alban fathers come
> And the long glories of majestic Rome."

Dryden, without understanding the versification of Chaucer, admired his poetic beauties and translated several of the "Canterbury Tales" into current English. "As he is the father of English poetry," he says, "so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense, learned in all sciences, and therefore speaks properly on all subjects." It is to Dryden's credit that he chose those tales that do not savor of immodesty — "Palamon and Arcite," "The Cock and the Fox," and the "Wife of Bath's Tale," the prologue of which is omitted. Though his renderings into modern English are excellent, Chaucer's charm is somehow largely lost. To be convinced of this fact, it is only necessary to compare his rendering of the "Good Parson" with the original of the "Prologue."

Among his songs and odes, the best known is "Alexander's Feast." He wrote it at a single sitting and afterward spent a fortnight in polishing it. It is justly considered one of the finest odes in our language. Dryden himself declared that it would never be surpassed. It was, perhaps, the last effort of his poetic genius, composed amid the pressing infirmities of age. It was fitting, to use the beautiful words of one of his heroes, that —

> "A setting sun
> Should leave a track of glory in the skies."

He died May 1, 1700, and was buried with imposing pomp in Westminster Abbey.

Dryden's prose is scarcely less excellent than his verse. He wrote much on criticism in the form of prefaces in his various works. He avoided, as a rule, the common mistakes in the prose of his time — inordinately long sentences and tedious parenthetic clauses. He says he formed his prose style on Tillotson; but Tillotson never had the ease, point, and brilliancy of Dryden. He was a clear, strong thinker, with a great deal to say; and often compressing his thought into a few well-chosen words, he sent them forth like shots from a rifle. He delighted in argument, and on either side of a question he could marshal his points with almost matchless skill. Whether attacking or defending the Roman Church, he showed equal power.

Dryden did not attain to the highest regions of poetry. He could not portray what is deepest and finest in human experience. His strong, masculine hands were too clumsy. He has no charm of pathos; he does not touch that part of our nature where "thoughts do often lie too deep for

tears." But he was a virile thinker and a master of the English tongue. He had the gift of using the right word; and in the words of Lowell he "sometimes carried common-sense to a height where it catches the light of a diviner air, and warmed reason till it had well-nigh the illuminating property of intuition."

He made literature a trade. He wrote rapidly, and having once finished a piece, he did not, year after year, patiently retouch it into perfection. Perhaps he wrote too much. Voltaire said that he "would have a glory without a blemish, if he had only written the tenth part of his works." Yet, in spite of his faults, we recognize and admire his extraordinary intellectual force and the indisputable greatness of his literary work. At Will's Coffee-house, where his chair had in winter a prescriptive place by the fire, and in summer a choice spot on the balcony, he was fitted, beyond all others of his time, to reign as literary dictator.

For the rest, we shall let Congreve speak — the poet whom Dryden implored "to be kind to his remains," and who was not untouched by the appeal. "Mr. Dryden," says his friend, "had personal qualities to challenge both love and esteem from all who were truly acquainted with him. He was of a nature exceedingly humane and compassionate, easily forgiving injuries, and capable of a prompt and sincere reconciliation with those who had offended him. Such a temperament is the only solid foundation of all moral virtues and sociable endowments. His friendship, when he professed it, went much beyond his professions, though his hereditary income was little more than a bare competency. As his reading had been

extensive, so was he very happy in a memory tenacious of everything he read. He was not more possessed of knowledge than communicative of it, but then his communication of it was by no means pedantic, or imposed upon the conversation; but just such, and went so far, as by the natural turn of the discourse in which he was engaged, it was necessarily promoted or required. He was extremely ready and gentle in his correction of the errors of any writer who thought fit to consult him, and felt as ready and patient to admit of the reprehension of others in respect of his own oversight or mistakes. He was of very easy, I may say of very pleasing, access, but somewhat slow, and, as it were, diffident in his advances to others. He had something in his nature that abhorred intrusion into any society whatever: indeed, it is to be regretted that he was rather blamable in the other extreme; for by that means he was personally less known, and consequently his character will become liable to misapprehension and misrepresentation. To the best of my knowledge and observation, he was, of all men that ever I knew, one of the most modest and the most easily to be discountenanced in his approaches either to his superiors or his equals."



Engraved by Simon after the painting by Kneller.

J. Addison.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

THERE is no other writer in English literature of whom we think more kindly than of Joseph Addison. Macaulay has given very strong expression to the same sentiment. "After full inquiry and impartial reflection," he says, "we have long been convinced that he deserved as much love and esteem as can be justly claimed by any of our infirm and erring race."

We read his writings with a refined and soothing pleasure. They possess a genial humor and unvarying cheerfulness that are contagious and delightful. There is no other writer who has greater power to dispel gloominess. As seen through his pages, the world appears wrapped in a mellow light. We learn to think more kindly of men, to smile at human foibles, to entertain ennobling sentiments, to trust in an overruling providence.

He does not indeed usually treat of the deeper interests of human life; he is never profound; he does not try to exhaust a subject — to write it to the dregs. His sphere is rather that of minor morals, social foibles, and small philosophy. But if he is not deep, he is not trifling; and if he is not exhaustive, he is always interesting. He uses satire, but it is never cruel. It does not, like that of Swift, scatter desolation in its path. On the contrary, it is tempered with a large humanity, and like a gentle rain, dispenses blessings in its course. It leads, not to cynicism, but to tenderness.

He enlisted wit on the side of virtue; and by his inimitable humor, good sense, genial satire, and simple piety, he wrought a great social reform. "So effectually, indeed," says Macaulay, "did he retort on vice the mockery which had recently been directed against virtue, that, since his time, the open violation of decency has always been considered amongst us the sure mark of a fool."

Joseph Addison was born in Wiltshire in 1672, his father, a man of some eminence, being dean of Lichfield. Though there is a tradition that he once took a leading part in barring out his teacher, and on another occasion played truant, his youthful scholarship proves him to have been a diligent student. From the school at Lichfield he passed to Charter House. Here he made the friendship of Steele, which, as we shall see, was not without influence upon his subsequent career and fame.

At the age of fifteen he entered Oxford with a scholarship far in advance of his years, attracted attention by his superior Latin verses, and was elected a scholar of Magdalen College, where he took his degree of Master of Arts in 1693. He was held in high regard for his ability and learning. His portrait now hangs in the college hall, and his favorite walk on the banks of the Cherwell is still pointed out.

After writing a number of Latin poems, which secured the praise of the great French critic Boileau, he made his first attempt in English verse in some lines addressed to Dryden, at that time preëminent among men of letters. This maiden effort had the good fortune to please the great author and led to an interchange of civilities.

At this time Addison's mind seemed inclined to poetry,

and he published some lines to King William, a translation of Virgil's fourth Georgic, and "An Account of the Greatest English Poets," all of which have but little to commend them except correct versification. The last poem is remarkable for having a discriminating criticism of Spenser, whose works the author at that time had not read. "So little sometimes," comments Dr. Johnson, "is criticism the effect of judgment."

Addison was a moderate Whig in politics, and by his poems had conciliated the favor of Somers and Montague, afterward Earl of Halifax. In conformity with the wishes of his father and his own inclinations, he contemplated taking orders in the Anglican Church; but through the influence of Montague, who was unwilling to spare him to the church, he was led to prepare himself for the public service.

He was granted a pension of three hundred pounds, and spent the next several years in travel on the Continent, visiting France, Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland. He improved his opportunities in perfecting his knowledge of the French language, in visiting localities of historic interest, and in making the acquaintance of illustrious scholars and statesmen. His observations on the French people, as given in a letter to Montague, are worth reading: "Truly, by what I have yet seen, they are the happiest nation in the world. 'Tis not in the power of want or slavery to make them miserable. There is nothing to be met with in the country but mirth and poverty. Every one sings, laughs, and starves. Their conversation is generally agreeable; for if they have any wit or sense, they are sure to show it. They never mend

upon a second meeting, but use all the freedom and familiarity at first sight that a long intimacy or abundance of wine can scarce draw from an Englishman. Their women are perfect mistresses in this art of showing themselves to the best advantage. They are always gay and sprightly, and set off the worst faces in Europe with the best airs." In general, his remarks upon the French character are not complimentary.

The immediate literary fruits of his travels were a poetical epistle to Lord Halifax, which ranks among his best verses, and "Remarks on Italy," in which his observations are made to illustrate the Roman poets. In his "Letter to Lord Halifax" he gives expression to his delight and enthusiasm in finding himself in the midst of scenes associated with his favorite authors: —

"Poetic fields encompass me around,
And still I seem to tread on classic ground;
For here the Muse so oft her harp has strung,
That not a mountain rears its head unsung;
Renowned in verse each shady thicket grows,
And every stream in heavenly numbers flows."

Here should be mentioned also one of his best hymns. While sailing along the Italian coast, he encountered a fierce storm. The captain of the ship lost all hope and confessed his sins to a Capuchin friar who happened to be on board. But the young English traveller solaced himself with the reflections embodied in the famous hymn: —

"When all thy mercies, O my God,
My rising soul surveys,
Transported with the view I'm lost
In wonder, love, and praise."

Toward the close of 1703 Addison returned to England and was cordially received by his friends. He was enrolled at the Kit-Kat Club and thus brought into contact with the chief lights of the Whig party. The way was soon opened to a public office.

The battle of Blenheim was fought in 1704, and Godolphin, the Lord Treasurer, wished to have the great victory worthily celebrated in verse. He was referred by Halifax to Addison. The result was "The Campaign," which was received with extraordinary applause both by the minister and the public. Its chief merit is the rejection of extravagant fiction, according to which heroes are represented as mowing down whole squadrons with their single arm, and a recognition of those qualities — energy, sagacity, and coolness in the hour of danger — which made Marlborough really a great commander: —

> "'Twas then great Marlbro's mighty soul was proved
> That, in the shock of charging hosts unmoved,
> Amidst confusion, horror, and despair,
> Examined all the dreadful scenes of war;
> In peaceful thought the field of death surveyed,
> To fainting squadrons sent the timely aid,
> Inspired repulsed battalions to engage,
> And taught the doubtful battle where to rage.
> So when an angel by divine command
> With rising tempests shakes a guilty land,
> Such as of late o'er pale Britannia past,
> Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
> And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm."

This simile of the angel the *Tatler* pronounced "one of the noblest thoughts that ever entered into the heart of man."

From this time on the career of Addison was a brilliant one. In 1704, in grateful recognition of his poem, he received the Excise Commissionership, made vacant by the death of the celebrated John Locke. In 1706 he became one of the Under-Secretaries of State; and two years later he entered Parliament, where, however, his natural timidity kept him from participating in the debates. In 1709 he was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland; and, while residing in that country, he entered upon that department of literature on which his fame chiefly rests, and in which he stands without a rival.

Shortly after Steele began the *Tatler* in 1709, he invited Addison's aid as a contributor. The result may be best expressed in Steele's own words: "I fared," he said, "like a distressed prince who calls in a powerful neighbor to his aid. I was undone by my auxiliary. When I had once called him in, I could not subsist without dependence on him." The *Tatler* was published three times a week, and, after reaching two hundred and seventy-one numbers, was discontinued Jan. 2, 1711.

It was succeeded by the *Spectator*, which appeared six times a week. The first number was issued March 1, 1711, — two months after the discontinuance of the *Tatler*. It was considered at the time a bold undertaking; but the result more than justified the confidence of Steele and Addison, its promoters.

It is made up of an incomparable series of short essays, which have all the interest of fiction and the value of philosophy. They are represented as the productions of an imaginary spectator of the world, a description of whom in the first paper we recognize as a caricature of Addison

himself. "Thus I live in the world," it is said, "rather as a spectator of mankind than as one of the species, by which means I have made myself a speculative statesman, soldier, merchant, and artisan, without ever meddling with any practical part in life. I am very well versed in the theory of a husband or a father, and can discern the errors in the economy, business, and diversions of others, better than those who are engaged in them; as standers-by discover blots, which are apt to escape those who are in the game. I never espoused any party with violence, and am resolved to observe an exact neutrality between the Whigs and Tories, unless I shall be forced to declare myself by the hostilities of either side. In short, I have acted in all the parts of my life as a looker-on, which is the character I intend to preserve in this paper."

The plan, it must be perceived, is excellent. Addison wrote about three-sevenths of the six hundred and thirty-five numbers. He poured into them all the wealth of his learning, observation, and genius. The variety is almost endless, but the purpose is always moral. He is a great teacher without being pedantic. His wholesome lessons are so seasoned with playful humor, gentle satire, and honest amiability that they encounter no resistance. Vice becomes ridiculous and virtue admirable. And his style is so easy, graceful, perspicuous, elegant, that it must remain a model for all time. "Give days and nights, sir," said the blunt Dr. Johnson, "to the study of Addison, if you mean to be a good writer, or what is more worth, an honest man."

The following paragraph from the Sir Roger de Cover-

ley papers — a famous and delightful series in the *Spectator* — describes the Knight at Church: —

"As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing psalms, half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces Amen three or four times to the same prayer, and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing."

The *Spectator* created a large constituency, and every number was eagerly waited for. It found a welcome in the coffee-houses and at many a breakfast-table. Its daily circulation was more than three thousand; and when the essays were published in book form, ten thousand copies of each volume were immediately called for, and successive editions were necessary to supply the popular demand.

In 1713 appeared Addison's tragedy of "Cato," the first four acts of which had been written years before in Italy. It was only at the urgent solicitation of his friends that he consented to its representation on the stage. Its success was astonishing. For a month it was played before crowded houses. Whigs and Tories vied with each other

in its praise, applying its incidents and sentiments to current politics. "The Whigs applauded every line in which liberty was mentioned, as a satire on the Tories; and the Tories echoed every clap, to show that the satire was unfelt." It was translated into Italian and acted at Florence.

On its publication, however, its popularity began to abate. It was savagely attacked by Dennis. Addison was too amiable to write a reply. Pope, however, assailed the furious critic, but left the objections to the play in full force. It is probable that he was more desirous of scourging Dennis than of vindicating Addison. At all events, Addison did not approve of the bitterness of Pope's reply, disclaimed all responsibility for it, and caused Dennis to be informed that whenever he thought fit to answer, he would do it in the manner of a gentleman. Of course Pope was mortified; and it is to this transaction that his dislike of Addison is probably to be traced.

"Cato" conforms to the classic unities and abounds in noble sentiment. But it is lacking in high poetic or dramatic interest. A scene in the fifth act, which represents Cato alone, sitting in a thoughtful posture with Plato's "Immortality of the Soul" in his hand, and a drawn sword on the table by him, is well known: —

> "It must be so — Plato, thou reason'st well! —
> Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?
> Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
> Of falling into nought? why shrinks the soul
> Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
> 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
> 'Tis heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
> And intimates eternity to man.

Eternity! thou pleasing, dreadful thought!
Through what variety of untried being,
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?
The wide, th' unbounded prospect lies before me;
But shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it.
Here will I hold. If there's a power above us,
(And that there is all nature cries aloud
Through all her works,) he must delight in virtue;
And that which he delights in, must be happy.
But when! or where! — This world was made for Cæsar.
I'm weary of conjectures. — This must end them.
[*Laying his hand on his sword.*]
Thus am I doubly armed; my death and life,
My bane and antidote are both before me:
This in a moment brings me to an end;
But this informs me I shall never die.
The soul, secured in her existence, smiles
At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.
The stars shall fade away, the sun himself
Grow dim with age, and nature sink in years;
But thou shalt flourish in immortal youth,
Unhurt amidst the wars of elements,
The wrecks of matter, and the crush of worlds."

In 1716, after a long courtship, Addison married Lady Warwick. She was a woman of much beauty, but also of proud and imperious temper. The marriage, it seems, did not add to his happiness. According to Dr. Johnson, the lady married him "on terms much like those on which a Turkish princess is espoused, to whom the Sultan is reported to pronounce, 'Daughter, I give thee this man for thy slave.'" His domestic infelicity caused him to seek more frequently the pleasures of the coffee-house. His fondness for wine likewise increased.

The year after his marriage he reached the summit of

his political career as Secretary of State. But his health soon failed; and after holding office for eleven months, he resigned on a pension of fifteen hundred pounds. His complaint ended in dropsy. A shadow was cast over the last years of his life by a quarrel with Steele, arising from a difference of political views. He died June 17, 1719. His last moments were perfectly serene. To his stepson he said, "See how a Christian can die." His piety was sincere and deep. All nature spoke to him of God; and the Psalmist's declaration that "the heavens declare the glory of God," he wrought into a magnificent hymn: —

> "The spacious firmament on high,
> With all the blue ethereal sky,
> And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
> Their great Original proclaim."

Speaking of this hymn, Thackeray says: "It seems to me those verses shine like the stars. They shine out of a great deep calm. When he turns to Heaven, a Sabbath comes over that man's mind; and his face lights up from it with a glory of thanks and prayer. His sense of religion stirs through his whole being. In the fields, in the town; looking at the birds in the trees; at the children in the streets; in the morning or in the moonlight; over his books in his own room; in a happy party at a country merry-making or a town assembly: good-will and peace to God's creatures, and love and awe of Him who made them, fill his pure heart and shine from his kind face. If Swift's life was the most wretched, I think Addison's was one of the most enviable. A life prosperous and beautiful — a calm death — an immense fame and affection afterward for his happy and spotless name."

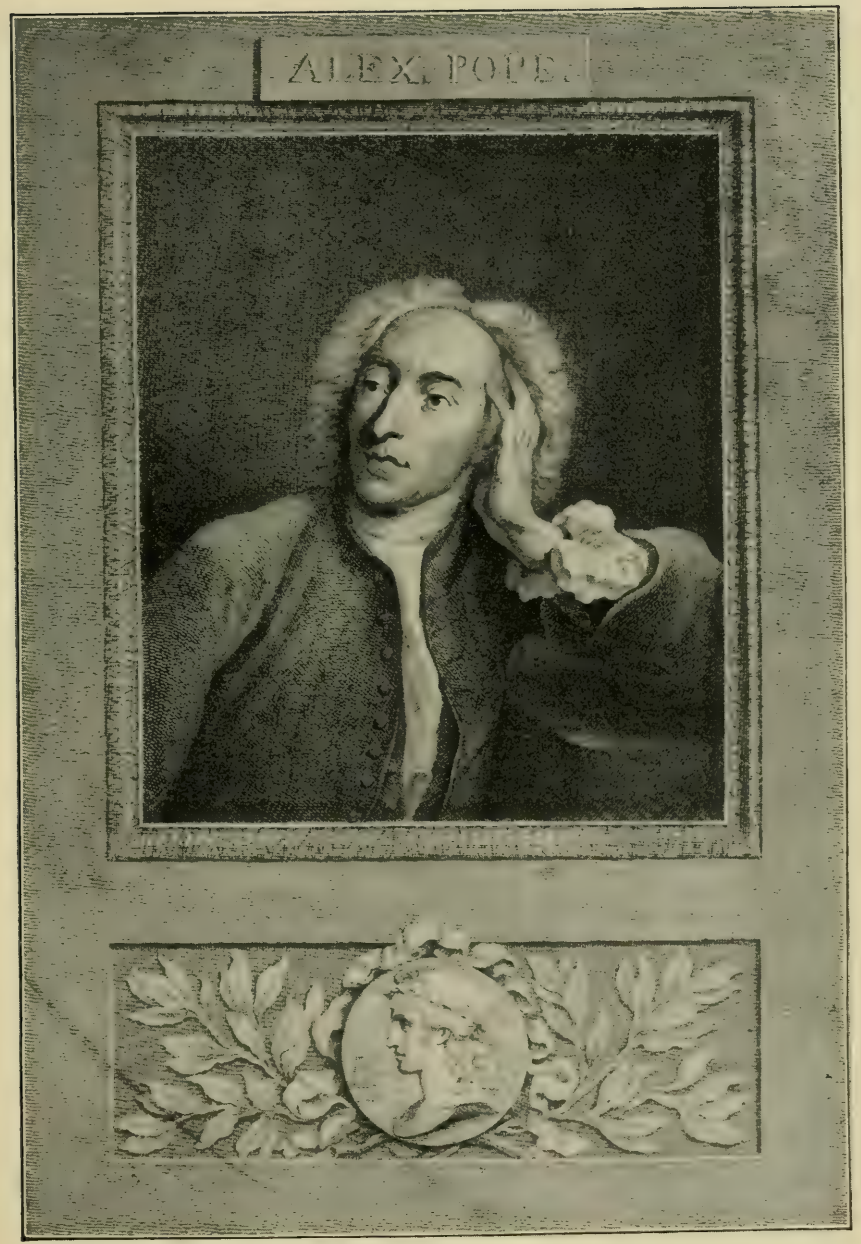
ALEXANDER POPE.

THE greatest literary character of this period is Alexander Pope. In his life we find much to admire and much to condemn; but we cannot deny him the tribute of greatness. With his spiteful temper and habitual artifice, we can have no sympathy; but we recognize in him the power of an indomitable will supported by genius and directed to a single object.

He triumphed over the most adverse circumstances. A lowly birth cut him off from social position; his Roman Catholic faith brought political ostracism; and a dwarfed, sickly, deformed body excluded him from the vocations in which wealth and fame are usually acquired. Yet, in spite of this combination of hostile circumstances, he achieved the highest literary distinction, attracted to him the most eminent men of his day, and associated on terms of equality with the proudest nobility.

Alexander Pope was born in London in 1688, the memorable year of the Revolution. His father, a Roman Catholic, was a linen merchant; and shortly after the poet's birth he retired with a competent fortune to a small estate at Binfield in Windsor Forest.

Though delicate and deformed, the future poet is represented as having been a sweet-tempered child; and his voice was so agreeable that he was playfully called the "little nightingale." Excluded from the public schools



Engraved by J. Stow after the painting by A. Pond.

A. Pope

on account of his father's faith, he passed successively under the tuition of three or four Roman priests, from whom he learned the rudiments of Latin and Greek. In after years he thought it no disadvantage that his education had been irregular; for, as he observed, he read the classic authors, not for the *words* but for the *sense*.

At the age of twelve he formed a plan of study for himself, and plunged into the delights of miscellaneous reading with such ardor that he came near putting an end to his life. While dipping into philosophy, theology, and history, he delighted most in poetry and criticism; and either in the original or in translations (for he read what was easiest) he familiarized himself with the leading poets and critics of ancient and modern times. But in the strict sense of the term he never became a scholar. Seeing all other avenues of life closed to him, he early resolved to devote himself to poetry, to which no doubt he felt the intuitive impulse of genius. He showed remarkable precocity in rhyme. In his own language, —

> "As yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> I lisp'd in numbers, for the numbers came."

He was encouraged in his early attempts by his father, who assigned him subjects, required frequent revisions, and ended with the encouragement, "These are good rhymes." Before venturing before the public as an author, he served a long and remarkable apprenticeship to poetry. Whenever a passage in any foreign author pleased him, he turned it into English verse. Before the age of fifteen he composed an epic of four thousand lines, in which he endeavored, in different passages, to imitate the

beauties of Milton, Cowley, Spenser, Statius, Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Claudian. "My first taking to imitating," he says, "was not out of vanity, but humility. I saw how defective my own things were, and endeavored to mend my manner by copying good strokes from others."

Among English authors he fixed upon Dryden as his model, for whom he felt so great a veneration that he persuaded some friends to take him to the coffee-house frequented by that distinguished poet. "Who does not wish," asks Johnson, "that Dryden could have known the value of the homage that was paid him and foreseen the greatness of his young admirer?"

His earliest patron, if such he may be called, was Sir William Trumbull, who, after serving as ambassador at Constantinople under James II., and as Secretary of State under William III., had withdrawn from public service and fixed his residence in the neighborhood of Binfield. The extraordinary precocity of the youthful poet delighted the aged statesman, who was accustomed to ride and discuss the classics with him. It was from him that Pope received the first suggestion to translate the "Iliad."

Another acquaintance belonging to this youthful period was William Walsh, a Worcestershire gentleman of fortune, who had some reputation at the time as a poet and critic. From him the ambitious youth received a bit of advice which has become famous. "We have had several great poets," he said, "but we have never had one great poet who was correct; and I advise you to make that your study and aim." This advice Pope evidently laid to heart.

At this time he made also the acquaintance of Wycherly, whose store of literary anecdote about a past generation

greatly entertained him. Unfortunately, however, his assistance was asked in revising some of Wycherly's verses; and this task he performed with so much conscientiousness and ability — cutting out here and adding there — that the aged author was mortified and offended.

At the age of sixteen Pope circulated some "Pastorals," which were pronounced equal to anything Virgil had produced at the same age. Before he had passed his teens he was recognized as the most promising writer of his time and was courted by the leading wits and people of fashion.

The first great work that Pope produced was the "Essay on Criticism," which was published in 1711. It was written two years previously, when the author was but twenty-one years of age. As was his custom with all his writings, he kept it by him in order to revise and polish it.

It shows a critical power and soundness of judgment that usually belong only to age and experience. It is true that the critical principles he lays down are not original or novel. At this time Pope had his head full of critical literature. Horace's "Ars Poetica" and Boileau's "L'Art Poétique" were perfectly familiar to him, to say nothing of Quintilian and Aristotle. He embodied in his poem the principles he found in his authorities. But he did this with such felicity of expression and aptness of illustration as to win the admiration, not only of his contemporaries, but also of succeeding generations.

"One would scarcely ask," says Leslie Stephen, "for originality in such a case, any more than one would desire a writer on ethics to invent new laws of morality. We require neither Pope nor Aristotle to tell us that critics

should not be pert nor prejudiced; that fancy should be regulated by judgment; that apparent facility comes by long training; that the sound should have some conformity to the meaning; that genius is often envied; and that dulness is frequently beyond the reach of reproof. We might even guess, without the authority of Pope, backed by Bacon, that there are some beauties which cannot be taught by method, but must be reached 'by a kind of felicity.'" Yet these commonplaces of criticism Pope has presented in inimitable form, exemplifying one of his own couplets: —

> "True wit is nature to advantage dressed;
> What oft was thought, but ne'er so well expressed."

The "Essay" is full of felicitous statements that instantly command the assent of the judgment and fix themselves in the memory. Some of the lines are in daily use. Who has not heard that —

> "To err is human; to forgive, divine."

And also —

> "For fools rush in where angels fear to tread."

By the poet's striking presentation we are sometimes tempted to accept error for truth, as when he tell us: —

> "A little learning is a dangerous thing!
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring."

His own lines often furnish a happy exemplification of his maxims. He tells us, for instance: —

> "'Tis not enough no harshness gives offence,
> The sound must seem an echo to the sense."

Then, by way of illustration, he continues: —

"Soft is the strain when Zephyr gently blows,
And the smooth stream in smoother numbers flows;
But when loud surges lash the sounding shore,
The hoarse, rough verse should like the torrent roar.
When Ajax strives some rock's vast weight to throw,
The line, too, labors, and the words move slow;
Not so when swift Camilla scours the plain,
Flies o'er th' unbending corn, and skims along the main."

But the poem is not without its faults. It would be too much to expect that; for, as he says: —

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be."

Its extreme conciseness renders it obscure in places; words are sometimes used in a vague and variable sense; and there is a noticeable poverty of rhymes, "wit" and "sense" and "fools" being badly overworked. Yet, if he had written nothing else, this production alone would have given him a high rank as critic and poet.

The publication of the "Essay" was the beginning of a ceaseless strife with contemporary writers. In the following lines the youthful poet had the temerity to attack Dennis, whose acquaintance we made in the sketch of Addison: —

"But Appius reddens at each word you speak,
And stares tremendous with a threatening eye,
Like some fierce tyrant in old tapestry."

This graphic picture inflamed the belligerent Dennis, and he made a bitter personal attack upon Pope, of whom, among other savage things, he says: "He may

extol the ancients, but he has reason to thank the gods that he was born a modern; for had he been of Grecian parents, and his father consequently had by law had the absolute disposal of him, his life had been no longer than that of one of his poems — the life of half a day."

Though Pope affected to despise these attacks, yet his sensitive nature was deeply wounded by them. To some friends he remarked, when one of Cibber's pamphlets came into his hand, "These things are my diversion." But they noticed that his features, as he read, writhed with anguish; and when alone one of them expressed the hope that he might be preserved from such diversion as had been that day the lot of Pope. But, as we shall see, his revenge was terrific.

The next important production of Pope was "The Rape of the Lock," published in 1712. It is the most brilliant mock-heroic poem ever written. The subject is trifling enough. Lord Petre, a man of fashion at the court of Queen Anne, playfully cut off a lock of hair from the head of Miss Arabella Fermor, a beautiful maid of honor. This freedom was resented by the lady, and the friendly intercourse of the two families was interrupted. To put the two parties into good humor, and thus to effect a reconciliation, Pope devised this humorous epic. Sylphs, gnomes, nymphs, and salamanders form a part of the delicate poetic machinery. Here is a description of the unfortunate lock: —

> "This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
> Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind
> In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
> With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.

Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray;
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey;
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair."

Speaking of the trifling circumstances that gave rise to this poem, Roscoe says: "To Cowley it might have suggested some quaint witticisms or forced allusions; to Waller or Suckling, a metaphysical song; Dryden would have celebrated it in some strong lines, remarkable for their poetical spirit and perhaps not less so for their indelicacy; while, by the general tribe of poets, it never could have been extended further than to a sweet epigram or a frigid sonnet. What is it in the hands of Pope? An animated and moving picture of human life and manners; a lively representation of the whims and follies of the times; an important contest, in which we find ourselves deeply engaged; for the interest is so supported, the manner so ludicrously serious, the characters so marked and distinguished, the resentment of the heroine so natural, and the triumph of the conqueror so complete, that we unavoidably partake the emotions of the parties and alternately sympathize, approve, or condemn."

In 1713 Pope undertook the translation of Homer's "Iliad." The work was published by subscription; and as he had already gained recognition as the first poet of his time, the enterprise met with generous encouragement. Among other influential friends, Swift was active in securing subscriptions. At first the poet was appalled at the magnitude of his undertaking, and wished, to use his own

phrase, that somebody would hang him. But facility increased with practice; and his defective knowledge of Greek was remedied by the use of translations and the aid of scholarly friends.

This translation, in connection with the "Odyssey," was his principal labor for twelve years, and it brought a remuneration that had never before been realized by an English author. He received altogether about eight thousand pounds, which furnished him with a competency the rest of his life. The translation is wrought out with exceeding care; but in its artificial character, it is far from reproducing the simplicity of the original. It brings Homer before us in a dress-suit. Bentley's criticism was exactly to the point: "It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." Yet it is a wonderful work; and Johnson was not far wrong when he said, "It is certainly the noblest version of poetry which the world has ever seen, and its publication must therefore be considered as one of the great events in the annals of learning."

In the sketch of Addison reference was made to the ill-feeling existing between the illustrious essayist and Pope. It came to an open rupture in connection with the publication of the "Iliad." Tickell, a friend of Addison's, undertook a rival translation. He had Addison's encouragement and perhaps also his assistance. It is possible that the essayist felt some jealousy of the rising reputation of the poet, and used his influence, in a civil way, to depreciate the latter's work. At all events, news of this sort came to Pope; and "the next day," he says, "while I was heated with what I had heard, I wrote a letter to Mr. Addison, to

let him know that I was not unacquainted with this behavior of his; that if I was to speak severely of him, in return for it, it should not be in such a dirty way; that I should rather tell him, himself, fairly of his faults, and allow his good qualities; and that it should be something in the following manner." He then added what has since become the famous satire on Addison, in which the lack of justice is made up by brilliancy of wit: —

"Peace to all such; but were there one whose fires
True genius kindles and fair fame inspires;
Blest with each talent and each art to please,
And born to write, converse, and live with ease;
Should such a man, too fond to rule alone,
Bear like the Turk no brother near the throne,
View him with scornful yet with jealous eyes,
And hate for arts that caused himself to rise,
Damn with faint praise, assent with civil leer,
And, without sneering, teach the rest to sneer;
Willing to wound and yet afraid to strike,
Just hint a fault and hesitate dislike,
Alike reserved to blame or to commend,
A timorous foe and a suspicious friend;
Dreading e'en fools, by flatterers besieged,
And so obliging that he ne'er obliged;
Like Cato give his little Senate laws,
And sit attentive to his own applause,
While wits and templars every sentence raise,
And wonder with a foolish face of praise; —
Who but must laugh if such a man there be?
Who would not weep if Atticus were he?"

After becoming independent from the proceeds of his Homeric translations, Pope removed to the villa of Twickenham, where he spent the remainder of his life. Here

he received his friends, who were among the most polished men of the time. Gay, Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke, Peterborough, Swift, were all warmly attached to him — "the most brilliant company of friends," says Thackeray, "that the world has ever seen."

We should not forget the filial piety he showed his parents — one of the most beautiful features of the poet's life. However spiteful, acrimonious, and exacting toward others, to his mother he was always tender, considerate, patient. In her old age he stayed by her, denying himself the pleasure of long visits and foreign travel. While conventionally courteous and formal in his relations to other women, for whom, after the fashion of the time, he seemed to entertain no high opinion, he was simple and unaffected toward her. And when she died, he spoke of her with peculiar tenderness: "I thank God, her death was as easy as her life was innocent; and as it cost her not a groan, or even a sigh, there is yet upon her countenance such an expression of tranquillity, nay, almost of pleasure, that it is even enviable to behold it. It would afford the finest image of a saint expired that ever painter drew."

As soon as Homer was off his hands, he proceeded to get even with the critics who had attacked his previous writings. The result was the "Dunciad," the most elaborate satirical performance in our language, which was given to the public in 1728.

We cannot think that, as he claims, his object was "doing good" by exposing ignorant and pretentious authors; from what we know of his character, we are justified in supposing that personal pique animated him no less than zeal for the honor of literature. Theobald, whose grievous

offence was surpassing Pope in editing Shakespeare, is elevated to the throne of Dulness, though he is afterward deposed to make place for Cibber.

"On the day the book was first vended," Pope tells us, "a crowd of authors besieged the shop; entreaties, advices, threats of law and battery, nay, cries of treason, were all employed to hinder the coming out of the 'Dunciad'; on the other side, the booksellers and hawkers made as great efforts to procure it. What could a few poor authors do against so great a majority as the public? There was no stopping a torrent with a finger, so out it came."

The satire had the desired effect; it blasted the characters it touched. One of the victims complained that for a time he was in danger of starving, as the publishers had no longer any confidence in his ability. The poem is not interesting as a whole, but contains many splendid flights, as in the concluding lines, which describe the eclipse of learning and morality under the darkening reign of advancing Dulness: —

"She comes! she comes! the sable throne behold
Of Night primeval, and of Chaos old!
Before her Fancy's gilded clouds decay,
And all its varying rainbows die away.
Wit shoots in vain its momentary fires,
The meteor drops, and in a flash expires.
As one by one, at dread Medea's strain,
The sickening stars fade off th' ethereal plain;
As Argus' eyes, by Hermes' wand oppressed,
Closed one by one to everlasting rest;
Thus at her felt approach, and secret might,
Art after art goes out, and all is night;

See skulking Truth to her old cavern fled,
Mountains of casuistry heap'd o'er her head!
Philosophy, that lean'd on Heaven before,
Shrinks to her second cause, and is no more.
Physic of Metaphysic begs defence,
And Metaphysic calls for aid on Sense!
See Mystery to Mathematics fly!
In vain, they gaze, turn giddy, rave, and die.
Religion, blushing, veils her sacred fires,
And unawares Morality expires.
Nor public flame, nor private dares to shine;
Nor human spark is left, nor glimpse divine.
Lo, thy dread empire, Chaos! is restored;
Light dies before thy uncreating word:
Thy hand, great Anarch, lets the curtain fall,
And universal darkness buries all."

This is, indeed, a fine passage, repaying careful study; but it hardly deserves the extravagant praise bestowed upon it by Thackeray. "In these astonishing lines," he says, "Pope reaches, I think, to the very greatest height which his sublime art has attained, and shows himself the equal of all poets of all times. It is the brightest ardor, the loftiest assertion of truth, the most generous wisdom, illustrated by the noblest poetic figure, and spoken in words the aptest, grandest, and most harmonious. It is heroic courage speaking; a splendid declaration of righteous wrath and war. It is the gage flung down, and the silver trumpet ringing defiance to falsehood and tyranny, deceit, dulness, superstition."

The "Essay on Man," his noblest work, appeared in 1733. It consists of four "Epistles": the first treats of man in relation to the universe; the second, in relation to himself; the third, in relation to society; and the fourth,

in relation to happiness. The "Epistles" are addressed to Bolingbroke, by whom the "Essay" was suggested, and from whom many of its principles proceeded. It is not so much a treatise on man as on the moral government of the world. Its general purpose is to —

"Vindicate the ways of God to man."

This is done by an application of the principles of natural religion to the origin of evil, the wisdom of the Creator, and the constitution of the world. But, as a whole, the "Essay" does not present a consistent and logical system of teaching. Pope was not master of the deep theme he had undertaken; and he was content to pick up in various authors whatever he could fit into his general plan. On the one hand he was attacked for having written against religion. Certainly moral responsibility disappears if we accept his declaration: —

"One truth is clear; whatever is, is right."

On the other hand, Warburton came forward to defend his orthodoxy; and his championship was gratefully accepted by the poet. "You have made my system," Pope wrote to him, "as clear as I ought to have done, and could not. . . . I know I meant just what you explain, but I did not explain my own meaning as well as you. You understand me as well as I do myself, but you express me better than I could express myself."

When, however, we turn from the whole to the separate parts, we are astonished at the marvellous expression and inimitable form. We may call it, with Dugald Stewart, "the noblest specimen of philosophical poetry which our

language affords." Single truths have never had more splendid statement. Here is his amplification of the truth that all things exist in God: —

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
That, changed through all, and yet in all the same,
Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame,
Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;
Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent;
Breathes in our soul, informs our mortal part,
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart;
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns,
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns:
To him no high, no low, no great, no small;
He fills, he bounds, connects, and equals all."

The religion of nature, as seen in the savage, has never had better expression than this: —

"Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutor'd mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
Behind the cloud-topp'd hill an humbler heaven;
Some safer world in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christians thirst for gold.
To be contents his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wings, no seraph's fire;
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company."

Pope died in 1744. A few days before his death he became delirious. On recovering his rationality, he referred to his delirium as a sufficient humiliation of the vanity of man. Bolingbroke was told that during his last illness Pope was always saying something kind of his present or absent friends, and that his humanity seemed to have survived his understanding. "It has so," replied the statesman; "and I never in my life knew a man that had so tender a heart for his particular friends, or more general friendship for mankind."

As the end drew near, Pope was asked whether a priest should not be called. He replied, "I do not think it essential, but it will be very right; and I thank you for putting me in mind of it." He had undoubting confidence in a future state. Shortly after receiving the sacrament, he said: "There is nothing that is meritorious but virtue and friendship, and indeed friendship itself is only a part of virtue." He lies buried at Twickenham.

In appearance he was the most insignificant of English writers. He was a dwarf, four feet high, hunch-backed, and so crooked that he was called the "Interrogation Point." His life was one long disease. He required help in dressing and undressing; and to keep erect, he had to encase his body in stays. Extremely sensitive to cold, he wore three or four times the usual amount of clothing. But his face was pleasing, his voice agreeable, and his eyes especially were beautiful and expressive. He was fastidious in dress and elegant in manner. As might naturally be expected, he was punctilious and troublesome, requiring so much attention that he was the dread of servants. Fond of highly seasoned dishes, and unable

to control his appetite, he frequently made himself sick by overeating.

He was singularly lacking in manly frankness, seeking always to attain his ends by artifice. It was said of him that he hardly drank tea without stratagem; and Lady Bolingbroke used to say that "he played the politician about cabbages and turnips." But he carried his artifice to higher matters and manipulated his correspondence and his writings in the interest of his reputation.

His character was full of contradictions. While professing to disregard fame, he courted it; while affecting superiority to the great, he took pleasure in enumerating the men of high rank among his acquaintances; while appearing indifferent to his own poetry, saying that he wrote when "he just had nothing else to do," he was always revolving some poetical scheme in his head, so that, as Swift complained, he was never at leisure for conversation; and while pretending insensibility to censure, he writhed under the attacks of critics. Yet it is to his credit that he never put up his genius to the highest bidder, and that he never indulged in base flattery for selfish ends. His translation of the "Iliad" he dedicated, not to influential statesmen or titled nobility, but to the second-rate dramatist, Congreve. In his view of life he fixed his attention upon its petty features, forgetting the divine and eternal relations that give it dignity and worth. There is truth in the following lines, but it is only one-sided: —

> "Behold the child, by nature's kindly law,
> Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw:

Some livelier plaything gives his youth delight,
A little louder, but as empty quite;
Scarfs, garters, gold, amuse his riper age,
And beads and prayer-books are the toys of age;
Pleased with this bauble still, as that before,
Till tired he sleeps, and life's poor play is o'er."

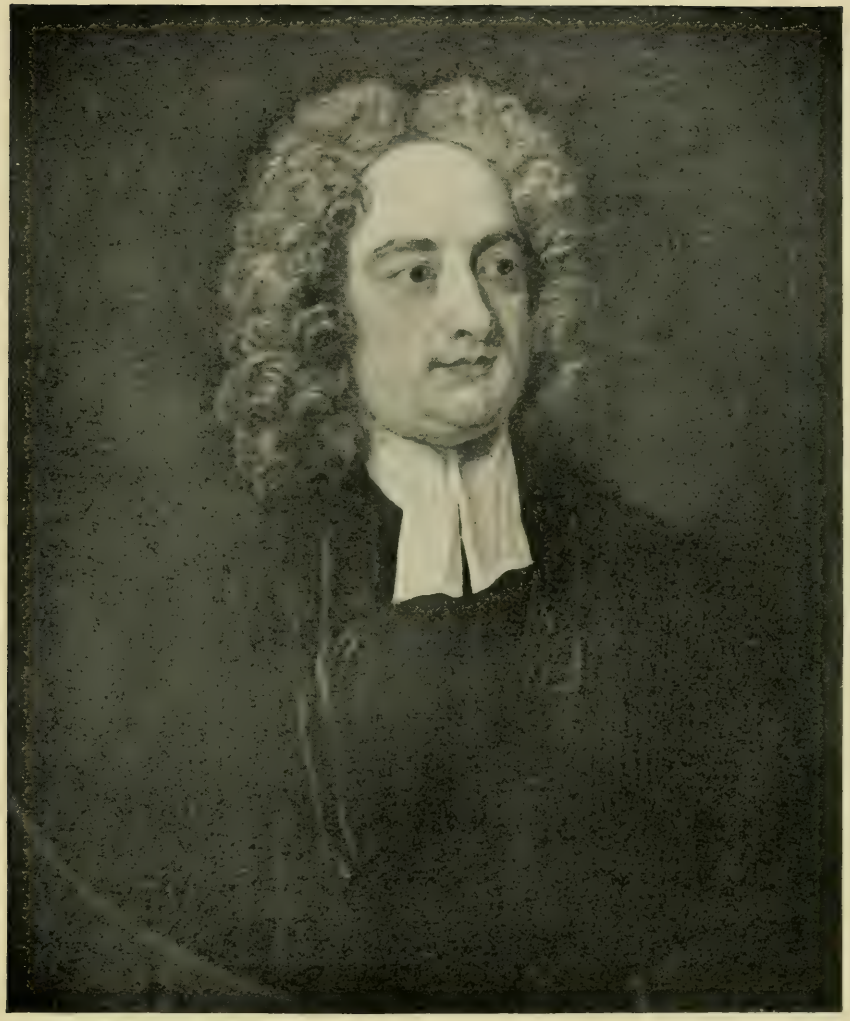
Virtue, love, divine stewardship, and eternal life take away this pettiness and give our existence here beauty and grandeur.

As a poet, it is too much to claim that his verses attained the highest imaginative flights, such as we find in Shakespeare and Tennyson. He was not swayed by the fine frenzy, the overmastering convictions, and the tormenting passions that irresistibly force an utterance. He conformed his writings to a conventional form. He sought above all, in imitation of classical models, correctness of style. And, in the words of James Russell Lowell, "in his own province he still stands unapproachably alone. If to be the greatest satirist of individual men, rather than of human nature, if to be the highest expression which the life of the court and the ballroom has ever found in verse, if to have added more phrases to our language than any other but Shakespeare, if to have charmed four generations, make a man a great poet — then he is one. He was the chief founder of an artificial style of writing, which in his hands was living and powerful, because he used it to express artificial modes of thinking and an artificial state of society. Measured by any high standard of imagination, he will be found wanting; tried by the test of wit, he is unrivalled."

JONATHAN SWIFT.

Of Swift as a writer there can hardly be more than one opinion. In originality and power he excelled all the writers of his day. His genius expressed itself in new and imperishable forms; and though much that he has written, especially in verse, is unworthy of him, his "Tale of a Tub," his "Gulliver's Travels," and his "Journal to Stella" will endure as long as the English language itself. No one else was more dreaded as an antagonist. "We were determined to have you on our side," the Tory leader Bolingbroke said to him; "you were the only one we were afraid of." During the last years of Queen Anne's reign he was the chief literary support of the Tory administration; and more than any one else, it has been said, he formed the political opinions of the English nation.

But of Swift as a man it is not easy to form a satisfactory estimate. His character exhibited contradictory qualities. In spite of the labors of numerous biographers and critics, he still, in some measure, remains an enigma. He was not a model of amiable temper or lofty purpose, and his career is full of striking and unpardonable faults. Yet that he was a monster of selfishness, hatred, and iniquity, as some have maintained, we cannot believe. He had the clear vision of a powerful mind. He saw through the shams and hypocrisies by which he was surrounded; and what has often been taken for heartless misanthropy



After the painting by Bindon.

Revt. Jonath: Swift.

was in reality an honest heroism which waged a thankless war on humbug and villainy. That he often went too far, that he was often coarse and terrible, cannot be denied or condoned. In his later years real or fancied wrongs goaded his proud, imperious nature into reckless fury.

Jonathan Swift was born in Dublin in 1667, though his parents were English. Owing to the death of his father, his childhood and youth were spent under the embarrassments of poverty and dependence. The seemingly grudging manner in which he was supported by his relatives, especially by his uncle Godwin, kindled a resentment that he never laid aside. Gratitude was not a marked feature of his character. "Was it not your uncle Godwin," he was once asked, "who educated you?" "Yes," replied Swift after a pause, "he gave me the education of a dog." "Then," replied the inquirer with great intrepidity, "you have not the gratitude of a dog."

In 1682 he entered Trinity College, Dublin, but did not apply himself assiduously to the course of study. His own account of his college life presents the facts in as favorable a manner as they will bear. "He was so discouraged and sunk in his spirits," he says, "that he too much neglected his academic studies, for some parts of which he had no great relish by nature, and turned himself to reading history and poetry, so that when the time came for taking his degree of Bachelor of Arts, although he had lived with great regularity and due observance of the statutes, he was stopped of his degree for dulness and insufficiency; and at last hardly admitted in a manner little to his credit, which is called in that college *speciali*

gratia." There is sufficient reason to believe that the "great regularity" which he ascribes to his life at this period is due chiefly to the distance from which the facts are viewed.

After leaving the university in 1688, Swift entered the family of Sir William Temple, a distinguished statesman and writer, with whom he spent, except two brief intervals, the next ten years of his life. Here he was initiated into politics and made the acquaintance of King William, by whom he was offered a troop of horse. He was once sent by Temple with a confidential communication to the king and used all his skill to enforce his patron's views. But the king's mind was made up; and this failure to carry his point Swift was wont to refer to as the first incident that helped to cure him of vanity. He improved his time by laborious study, reading, it is said, eight hours a day. At length he took orders and obtained a small living in Ireland; but finding a remote country parish more irksome than his previous position, he returned to Sir William Temple's and remained there till that nobleman's death in 1699. He edited the works of his patron and dedicated them to William III., in the hope of receiving some preferment; but in this, as in so many other cases, he suffered disappointment.

While living in the house of Sir William Temple, Swift composed his first important work, "The Battle of the Books." At this time the relative merits of ancient and modern authors was being debated in France and England. Temple had espoused the cause of the ancients with more zeal than learning; and as he had fared badly at the hands of Wotton and Bentley, — the latter the most eminent

scholar of his day, — Swift came to his patron's defence in a satirical production, giving "a full and true account of the battle fought last Friday between the ancient and the modern books in St. James's library." It is a prose imitation of Homer's style in the "Iliad." Of course he makes the victory incline to the side of the ancients; and Bentley and Wotton are left on the field transfixed by the same spear. This work was not published till 1704, though written several years previously.

In 1699 Swift went to Ireland as chaplain to Lord Berkeley, who was appointed one of the lord justices of that kingdom. He complained, not unjustly, of that nobleman's unkindness to him in bestowing preferments. Swift was put off with the unimportant vicarage of Laracor. Notwithstanding his disappointment, he discharged his duties faithfully under discouraging circumstances. His congregations averaged only half a score. On one occasion there was no person present but his clerk Roger; with grim humor Swift began: "Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me in sundry places," etc., and then proceeded regularly through the whole service. For a time he had the ambition to excel as a preacher; but he afterward lost confidence in his oratorical ability and declared that his sermons were only pamphlets. Some years before his death, he gave his entire collection to Dr. Sheridan with the remark, "They may be of use to you, they have never been of any to me." But an examination of his discourses shows that he unduly depreciated them. While they are lacking in oratorical fervor, they are clear and strong presentations of moral and religious truth, reflecting no discredit on the author's ability or piety.

Swift sought preferment through a good part of his life. His heart was long set on a bishopric. Had he been a man of less genius and less independence, his ambition might have been gratified. But he could not be counted on to pull steadily in party traces; and while feared by his enemies, he was never fully trusted by his friends. He was first a Whig; then he turned Tory, and mercilessly lashed his former party associates. In proud consciousness of his power, he was exacting and imperious in his relations with the great. "I generally am acquainted with about thirty in the drawing-room," he writes to Stella, "and am so proud that I make all the lords come up to me." He once demanded an apology of the prime minister, and having obtained it, he wrote, "I have taken Mr. Harley into favor again." The highest preferment Swift was able to obtain was the deanery of St. Patrick's in Dublin; and this office, which he held till the close of his life, he looked on as an exile.

Swift's strength lay chiefly in calm, cold, merciless satire. In this style of writing he has no equal, perhaps, in the whole range of literature. His satirical gift amounts to real genius. But there is in it no genial humor, such as renders Addison's writings so charming. His touch is not playful, tender, delicate. Morbidly sensitive to the evils in society, the church, and the state, he castigates them in terrible earnest. He is grimly saturnine. In the "Modest Proposal" for preventing the children of poor people in Ireland from being a burden to their parents or country, and for making them beneficial to the public, we almost shudder at the impassive seriousness with which he introduces his hideous plan. "I have been assured," he says,

"by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious, nourishing, and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee or a ragout."

In 1704 Swift published a powerful satire entitled, "A Tale of a Tub," the object of which was to ridicule what he regarded as the inconsistency and intolerance of the leading bodies into which Christendom is divided. A father is described on his death-bed as bequeathing to each of his three sons, Peter, Martin, and Jack (representing Romanists, Anglicans, and Dissenters), a new coat. This was the Christian religion. "Now you are to understand," said the father, "that these coats have two virtues contained in them: one is, that with good wearing they will last you fresh and sound as long as you live; the other is, that they will grow in the same proportion with your bodies, lengthening and widening of themselves, so as to be always fit." They were to live together in one house as brethren and friends.

For the first seven years all went well. Then the brothers came to town, fell in love with the Duchess d'Argent, Madame de Grands Titres, and the Countess d'Orgueil, representing covetousness, ambition, and pride. To win the favor of these ladies, the brothers began to live as gallants. But they were embarrassed by the plainness of their coats. After some time, by a marvellous interpretation of their father's will (the Bible), they added shoulder knots. Silver fringe (representing outward splendor) was soon in fashion; and consulting the will again, they found, to their great astonishment, these words: "I charge and

command my said three sons to wear no sort of silver fringe upon or about their said coats." What was to be done? Peter, with great erudition and critical skill, removed the difficulty. He "had found in a certain author, which he said should be nameless, that the same word which in the will is called *fringe* does also signify a *broomstick;* and doubtless ought to have the same interpretation in this paragraph." By similar outrageous subterfuges the three brothers added gold lace and flame-colored satin linings to their coats and lived in the height of fashion. Finally, their father's will was locked up and disregarded entirely. Peter began to put on airs; and styling himself "My Lord Peter," cast his brothers out of the house.

The genius displayed in "The Tale of a Tub" is unmistakable; but the general tone of the satire — its coarseness, irreverence, and indiscrimination — called forth general condemnation. More than anything else, it stood in the way of the coveted bishopric. His enemies used it to his disadvantage; and as we read it to-day, we can hardly find fault with the judgment expressed at the time, that the author was not fit to be a bishop.

In 1710 Swift went to London on business connected with the Irish church, and spent there the next three years — perhaps the happiest years of his life. He was intimately associated with the political and literary leaders of the metropolis. Politics and literature were more intimately associated then than at the present time. His political pamphlets exerted an immense influence on public opinion. He was the most trenchant and formidable pamphleteer of his day. He lived on terms of intimacy with Addison and Pope, and used his influence at court to

advance the interests of his friends. It was during these years in London that he wrote his remarkable "Journal to Stella," in which we see so vividly the life of the time. In his second letter he writes: "Henceforth I will write something every day to MD [1] and make it a sort of journal; and when it is full, I will send it whether MD writes or not; and so that will be pretty, and I shall always be in conversation with MD." He adhered to his promise; and day after day he wrote down the most trifling occurrences, — the persons he met, where he dined, what he ate and spent, his hopes and fears, political, social, and literary gossip, — a record almost without parallel in literature for the historic importance of the men and events that figure in its pages, and for the clearness with which it reproduces the life of another age.

But who was Stella? This leads us to a consideration of Swift's relation to women, one of the most unsatisfactory and mysterious features of his life. His powerful individuality, together with his brilliant conversation and keen wit, made a deep impression on the opposite sex. He was constantly surrounded by a group of admiring women. But there were two in whom he inspired a deathless devotion, which in the end rendered their lives desolate. How far he was to blame, it is now impossible to tell. There is an unsolved mystery hanging over his conduct, of which we have only a hint. After a private conversation with Swift, which seems to have been some sort of confession, Archbishop King said to a friend, "You have just met the most unhappy man on earth;

[1] The initials of My Dear — a part of the little language of endearment he constantly employs.

but on the subject of his wretchedness you must never ask a question."

Stella is a poetic name which Swift bestowed on Esther Johnson, a beautiful, dark-eyed girl, whom he had met at Sir William Temple's, and whose studies he had directed. This relation ripened into a feeling of at least sincere friendship on the part of Swift, and on the part of Stella into a lasting devotion. After his settlement in Ireland, she removed thither, at his request, to be near him, and remained there during his sojourn in London.

In the metropolis he met another and accomplished young woman named Esther Vanhomrigh, to whom he gave the poetic sobriquet of Vanessa. He frequently dined at her mother's — insensibly drawn, perhaps, by an attraction he had not the courage to recognize. He interested himself in Vanessa's studies and was repaid with an impassioned and quenchless love. She possessed ample means; and after his return to Dublin, she followed him. In his embarrassing situation between Stella and Vanessa, he temporized for a time, unable or fearing to discard either beauty.

At last he consented to a secret marriage with Stella in 1716. But it was a marriage only in name. At length Vanessa, grown weary with years of waiting, wrote a letter of inquiry to Stella. This step incensed the imperious dean beyond measure. He suddenly appeared before her in a paroxysm of fury; and, without saying a word, but with a fierce countenance that struck terror to her heart, he threw down the unfortunate letter and instantly left the house. It was Vanessa's death-warrant; and in a few weeks, in 1723, she died of a broken heart. Stella

survived her five years, but with all the sweetness of life gone. On her death-bed, Swift, referring to their marriage, said, "Well, my dear, if you wish it, it shall be owned." Her pathetic answer was, "It is too late." As a memento, he kept a little package, on which was inscribed, "Only a woman's hair."

In 1724 an opportunity presented itself for Swift to take vengeance on the English government for his exile. A patent had been granted to William Wood to supply Ireland with a debased copper coinage. Swift attacked the scheme in a series of letters published in a Dublin newspaper and signed "M. B. Drapier." They were seven in number and are known as the "Drapier Letters." They were written with great ingenuity and power; and, as a result, the Irish people were roused to fury, and the English government found it necessary to cancel the patent. Swift became the most popular man in Ireland; and to arrest him, it was said, would require a force of ten thousand men.

Two years later appeared his most famous work, "Gulliver's Travels." Though containing numerous references to the political and social condition of England, it may, as a whole, be considered as a satire on the human race. It consists of four voyages. In the first, Gulliver visits Lilliput, where the inhabitants are six inches high, and all other objects — houses, trees, ships, animals — are in the same proportion. In the second voyage, he goes to Brobdingnag, a country of enormous giants sixty feet tall. In the third, he visits Laputa and other fantastic countries. In the last voyage, he discovers the country of the Houyhnhnms, in which horses are the rational

and dominant race, and men, under the name of Yahoos, are degraded to the state of irrational brutes. The whole story is told with an air of candor that rivals Defoe. The satire, which is filled with a delightful variety of incidents, is lighter and more entertaining in the first two parts; but in the last two the misanthropy overpowers the humor and arouses a feeling of indignant protest. Whatever may be their frailties and sins, men are not Yahoos.

None of Swift's writings give us a clearer insight into his character than his "Thoughts on Various Subjects." They are in the form of aphorisms, which embody much shrewd observation, but also a good deal of error and cynicism. A few are given: —

"We have just enough religion to make us hate, but not enough to make us love, one another."

"All fits of pleasure are balanced by an equal degree of pain or languor; it is like spending this year part of the next year's revenue."

"The latter part of a wise man's life is taken up in curing the follies, prejudices, and false opinions he had contracted in the former."

"When a true genius appears in the world, you may know him by this sign, that the dunces are all in confederacy against him."

"The reason why so few marriages are happy is because young ladies spend their time in making nets, not in making cages."

"The stoical scheme of supplying our wants by lopping off our desires, is like cutting off our feet when we want shoes."

Swift has left a considerable body of verse — it cannot

in justice be called poetry. After perusing one of his early metrical pieces, Dryden remarked, "Cousin Swift, you will never be a poet." This judgment, which does credit to Dryden's critical sagacity, cost him the implacable dislike of Swift. Swift's mind was lacking in warm imagination and delicate sensibility. He saw things in their reality. In spite of its intellectual power, his mind had an abnormal tendency to what is low and disgusting. His verse is disfigured, as is much of his prose, by a coarseness and obscenity which are no longer tolerated among respectable people.

His style is in perfect keeping with the man. He was too proud for affectation. He wrote as he lived; and in all his works we find him direct, unconventional, strong. In the language of Thackeray, who is far from being partial to the dean, "He shuns tropes and metaphors, and uses his ideas and words with a wise thrift and economy, as he used his money, with which he could be generous and splendid upon great occasions, but which he husbanded when there was no need to spend it. He never indulges in needless extravagance of rhetoric, lavish epithets, profuse imagery. He lays his opinion before you with a grave simplicity and a perfect neatness."

In his social relations Swift exhibited some of the eccentricities of genius. He disdainfully trampled on conventional forms and amenities, assuming to be a law unto himself. He was sometimes outrageous in his insolence and pride. Dining one day with the Earl of Burlington, he said to the mistress of the house, "Lady Burlington, I hear you can sing; sing me a song." The lady naturally resented this freedom of address, and promptly de-

clined. "Why, madam," he exclaimed, "I suppose you take me for one of your poor English hedge-parsons; sing when I bid you." The lady burst into tears and left the room. The next time he met her, his salutation was, "Pray, madam, are you as proud and ill-natured now as when I saw you last?"

But, notwithstanding these faults, there was something in his strong individuality that possessed an unusual charm. He was much sought after in London society, and during his stay there, as we learn from the "Journal to Stella," scarcely a day passed that he did not dine with some celebrity. His friendships were as strong as his dislikes were bitter. He warmly promoted Pope's translation of Homer and declared his purpose not to let the poet publish a line till he had raised for him a thousand guineas. He loved his mother tenderly; and when she died in 1710, he wrote: "I have now lost the last barrier between me and death. God grant that I may be as well prepared for it as I confidently believe her to have been! If the way to Heaven be through piety, truth, justice, and charity, she is there."

The closing years of his life were pitiful. Walking with some friends, one day, just outside of Dublin, he remained behind. He was gazing intently at a lofty tree, the top of which had been blasted. Upon the approach of Dr. Young, one of the party, Swift pointed to it, and said with significance, "I shall be like that tree, and die first at the top." His forebodings were fulfilled. About the year 1736 his memory began to fail. The giddiness and deafness, from which he had suffered nearly all his life, greatly increased. He lost all taste for society and no longer took pleasure in writing or in books; his days, filled with

pain and desolateness, dragged heavily along. At last his understanding failed him, and in 1740 it became necessary to appoint guardians of his person and estate. From this sad condition he was released by death, in 1745. He lies buried in the cathedral of St. Patrick.

Swift is one of the most tragic figures in English literature. His character exhibits strength without elevation. His dominant passion was an imperious pride that sought to bend everything to his will. In his lust for power, he acted largely on the principle of "rule or ruin." His frequent disappointments filled his heart with bitterness, yet he was not without kind and generous impulses; but, to escape the praises or gratitude of men, he frequently concealed his charities, or accompanied them with a wilfully offensive brusqueness. His piety has been unjustly questioned. While he waged a relentless war on hypocrisy and formalism, he was deeply religious at heart; and in his hour of greatest need he lifted his soul in agonizing prayer to God.

AGE OF JOHNSON.

PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

ORATORS. — Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816), orator, politician, and dramatist. Pitt said of his speech in the trial of Warren Hastings, "that it surpasses all the eloquence of ancient or modern times." Two of his dramas, "The Rivals" (1775) and "The School for Scandal" (1777), take high rank.

Edmund Burke (1730–1797). Orator, statesman, and author. His principal works are his "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful" (1756) and his "Reflections on the Revolution in France" (1790).

HISTORIANS. — David Hume (1711–1776). Historian and philosopher. Author of "Essays Moral and Political" (1741), "Inquiry Concerning the Human Understanding" (1748), "History of England" (1754–1762), etc.

William Robertson (1721–1793). Clergyman and historian. Author of "History of Scotland" (1759), "History of Charles V." (1769), and "History of America" (1777).

Edward Gibbon (1737–1794). Author of "The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" (1776–1788), etc.

POETS. — Mark Akenside (1721–1771). His principal book is his "Pleasures of the Imagination" (1744), suggested by Addison's essay on the same subject in the *Spectator*.

Thomas Gray (1716–1771). His poem "A Distant Prospect of Eton College" (1742) attracted attention. His best-known poem is the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" (1750). "Progress of Poesy" (1755) and "The Bard," which was not completed, are his other productions. One of the most artistic of English poets.

William Collins (1721–1759). A lyrical poet of fine genius. His volume of "Odes," published in 1747, fell still-born from the press.

His "Ode on the Death of Thomson," "Ode to Evening," and "Ode on the Passions" are excellent poems.

George Crabbe (1754–1832). His principal poem is "The Village" (1783). He was Augustan in the form of his poetry, using the rhymed couplet, but modern in spirit. Byron calls him "Nature's sternest painter, but the best."

James Beattie (1735–1803). "The Minstrel," his best poem, appeared, the first part, in 1771, and the second part in 1774. It is written in Spenserian stanza and marks the transition from the artificial to the natural school.

William Shenstone (1714–1763). "The Schoolmistress" (1742) is a poem in Spenserian verse, belonging to the rising romantic school. It describes a village school.

Miscellaneous. — Thomas Warton (1728–1790). Professor of Poetry at Oxford, and author of a "History of English Poetry" (1781), extending to the early part of the seventeenth century.

Thomas Percy (1729–1811). Bishop, and author of "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry."

James Boswell (1740–1795). Friend of Dr. Johnson, noting that great writer's speech and actions. His "Life of Dr. Johnson" (1791) is regarded as one of the best biographies ever written.

Horace Walpole (1717–1797). Earl of Oxford, and author of "The Castle of Otranto" (1765), written in an extravagant romantic style, and "Historic Doubts on the Life and Reign of Richard III." (1768).

Adam Smith (1723–1790). Political economist, and author of "The Wealth of Nations" (1776), a widely influential book, laying the foundations of a national political economy.

GREAT REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

Samuel Johnson. Edward Gibbon.
Oliver Goldsmith. William Cowper.
Robert Burns.

VI.

AGE OF JOHNSON.

(1745–1800.)

Characteristics of period — Transition — Brotherhood of man — Declaration of Independence — Democratic tendencies — Advancing intelligence — Newspapers — Moral and religious improvement — Philanthropy — England a world-power — Results on English character — Oratory — Pitt, Burke — Historical writing — Hume, Robertson — Romantic movement — Effects — Humanity — Nature — SAMUEL JOHNSON — OLIVER GOLDSMITH — EDWARD GIBBON — WILLIAM COWPER — ROBERT BURNS.

THE course of English literature is marked by a succession of rises and descents. Notwithstanding the presence of a few writers of marked excellence, the period under consideration is one of decadence. Old influences were giving place to new. This period is named after Johnson, the great literary dictator, simply as a matter of convenience. While he was the centre of an influential literary group for many years, and the most picturesque and commanding literary figure of his time, other and mightier influences were at work, giving a new tone and direction to literature.

In great measure Johnson bore the impress of the preceding period. In his poetry he is coldly classical; and in a part, at least, of his prose, he is an imitator of Addison. The real characteristic of this second half of the eighteenth century is transition. By the side of the literary forms and canons of the age of Pope, there arose a new kind of writ-

ing distinguished by a return to nature. Artificial poetry had already been carried to its utmost limits; and if literature was to reach a higher excellence, it was obliged to assume a new form. And to this it was urged by the momentous social, political, and religious changes that took place, not only in England, but on the Continent and in America during the latter part of the century.

In their onward course mankind made a marked advance. In social and political relations the rights of men were more clearly recognized, and the brotherhood of mankind began to affect existing customs and institutions. As in all great forward movements of the world, a variety of causes co-operated in bringing about great changes. Unwilling hands often played an important part. The stupidity and obstinacy of George III. and of some of his ministers hastened the formal declaration of those principles of liberty which mark a new era in civil government.

A strong tendency of the age was crystallized in the Declaration of Independence. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," said the wise and courageous representatives of the American colonists, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and hap-

piness." This solemn declaration sounded the knell of absolutism in the world. It is a political gospel that is destined to leaven the whole lump.

But how came the American colonists to a recognition of the weighty truths embodied in this declaration? They simply voiced the growing spirit of the age. The greater diffusion of knowledge had opened the eyes of men to a better perception of truth. The force of custom and prejudice was, in a measure, broken. The claims of superiority set up by privileged classes were seen to be baseless, and injustice and oppression in the state were discerned and denounced.

In England there was a noteworthy advance in popular intelligence. Remarkable inventions in the mechanic arts placed new power in the hands of the producing classes. The use of coal in smelting iron; the opening of canals throughout England; the invention of the spinning-jenny and power-loom; the perfecting of the steam-engine with its wide application to manufacturing purposes — all this brought people together in large communities, greatly raised the average intelligence, and established the industrial supremacy of England.

Printing-presses were set up in every town; circulating libraries were opened; newspapers were multiplied; and monthly magazines and reviews fostered the general intelligence that called them into being. The proceedings of Parliament were regularly published and naturally became the subject of discussion in every club-room and at many a hearthstone. The first great English journals — the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Post*, and the *Times* — date from this period.

The moral and religious state of society showed marked improvement. The Wesleyan revival had rendered the fox-hunting clergyman an impossibility. Grossness gave way to decorum in life. Indecency was almost wholly banished from the stage and from literature. This happy change is illustrated in an incident told us by Sir Walter Scott. His grandaunt assured him that, when led by curiosity to turn over the pages of a novel in which she had delighted in her youth, she was astonished to find that, sitting alone at the age of eighty, she was unable to read without shame a book which sixty years before she had heard read out for amusement in large circles, consisting of the best society in London.

This improved moral tone was not restricted to sentiment. One of the noble features of this period was the active efforts to improve the condition of the unfortunate and the oppressed. The slave-trade, which Englishmen had long made a source of profitable commerce, was abolished. Hospitals were established. Howard, by his noble enthusiasm and incessant labors, secured a reform in prison discipline. Robert Raikes of Gloucester established the Sunday-school, which for England was the beginning of popular education.

With the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, England entered upon her career as a world-power. She ceased, in large measure, to be a rival of Germany or France. By the treaty of Paris, in 1763, Canada and the Mississippi Valley were ceded to England, and the future of America as an English-speaking nation was secured. Through the fearless explorations of Cook, numerous islands in the Pacific, including Australia, were added to the domain of

England. The victory of Plassey, in 1757, laid the foundation of English supremacy in India. England was felt to be, to use the words of Burke, "but part of a great empire, extended by our virtue and our fortune to the farthest limits of the east and the west."

The inevitable result of all these conditions was an increasing sense of power, a greater breadth of view, and especially a clearer recognition of the rights of men. The foundations were laid for a vigorous literature, but the completed results were not to appear till the succeeding period. A noteworthy feature of the time is the predominance of prose. Poetry retires somewhat into the background; fancy gives place to reason. It was a practical age, largely absorbed in material advancement and political and social reform.

The period of Johnson was brilliant in its oratory. The world has never seen a group of greater orators than Pitt, Fox, Chatham, Sheridan, Burke. Great questions of government presented themselves for consideration and action. Through the activity of the press, eloquence was no longer bounded by the halls of Parliament, but extended to the limits of the kingdom. Much of the eloquence of the time is imperishable. The principles of human liberty, of sound political economy, and of manly integrity have never had better utterance. "Sir," exclaimed Pitt, after the passage of the Stamp Act had aroused resistance, "I rejoice that America has resisted. Three million of people, so dead to all the feelings of liberty as voluntarily to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest."

The most prominent figure in this group of orators was

Edward Burke. "I have learned more from him," exclaimed Fox in a burst of admiration, "than from all the books I ever read." To philosophical depth Burke added the glow of imagination; and to vast resources of fact, he joined the warmth of ardent feeling. His grasp of principles and his expression of lofty sentiment give a permanent value to his masterful speeches. Though he sometimes wearied his auditors by his profundity and length, his efforts at their best have the immortality that belongs to the orations of his master Cicero. Among his many able speeches, that on "Conciliation with America" is usually regarded as the best.

But Burke was an author as well as orator. In 1756 he wrote an "Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful," which, though highly esteemed in its day, has been superseded by later works on art criticism. In 1770 appeared his "Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents," which is an elevated, philosophical discussion of existing political conditions. His most important work is his "Reflections on the French Revolution." It was a passionate arraignment of the revolutionary movement. "Its appeal to the passions, its cruel force and wit," says Gosse, "its magnificent, direct incentive to reaction, all these gave the 'Reflections' an amazing interest to those who had just witnessed, with bewilderment, the incomprehensible and unexampled progress of events in France. Upon all the trembling kings of Europe, upon the exiles on the Rhine especially, the book fell like rain after a long drought."

In his political career Burke kept himself infinitely above the hypocrisy and sycophancy of the demagogue. Not for a moment did he lay aside the independence and dig-

nity of a great statesman. No other representative of the people ever gave a manlier account of his stewardship than did he to the electors of Bristol. After meeting in perfect frankness and candor the objections that had been urged against his conduct in Parliament, he concluded: "And now, gentlemen, on this serious day when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges that are against me. I do not here stand before you accused of venality or neglect of duty. It is not said that, in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition or to my fortune. It is not alleged that, to gratify any anger or revenge of my own or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any one man in any description. No! The charges against me are all of one kind: that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far — further than a cautious policy would warrant, and further than the opinions of many would go along with me. In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress, I will call to mind this accusation and be comforted."

During the period before us, historical writing attained an excellence that has scarcely been surpassed. There arose three great historians who brought to their narratives philosophical insight and a finished excellence of style. Among the historians of the world, there are few greater names than Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon.

Hume very early developed a passion for literature, which continued through life his ruling purpose and chief

enjoyment. He was encouraged by his family to devote himself to law, but he felt a strong aversion to everything but philosophy and general learning. He went to France to prosecute his studies in a country retreat. "I there laid that plan of life," he says, "which I have steadily and successfully pursued. I resolved to make a very rigid frugality supply my deficiency of fortune, to maintain unimpaired my independency, and to regard every object as contemptible, except the improvement of my talents in literature."

His earlier publications — a "Treatise on Human Nature" and his "Philosophical Essays" — slowly gained recognition. His sceptical and philosophical views were attacked. The sale of his works increased. But he never allowed himself to be drawn into controversy. "I had a fixed resolution," he says, "which I inflexibly maintained, never to reply to anybody; and not being very irascible in my temper, I have easily kept myself clear of literary squabbles. These symptoms of a rising reputation gave me encouragement, as I was ever more disposed to see the favorable than the unfavorable side of things; a turn of mind which is more happy to possess than to be born to an estate of ten thousand a year."

In 1751 he removed from the country to Edinburgh, where the most of his subsequent life was spent. Here he soon began his "History of England," the work that has given him a permanent place in English literature. The successive volumes appeared at intervals between 1754 and 1762. At first coldly received, it gradually forced itself into notice and became the source of a considerable income. It is characterized by great clearness and elegance

of narrative, but is not always trustworthy and judicial in its conclusions. His judgment was sometimes warped by his sceptical and Tory prejudices. Macaulay pronounces him "an accomplished advocate."

William Robertson, like Hume, early manifested a strong literary enthusiasm and ambition. The commonplace books of his student days bore the motto, "*Vita sine literis mors est*" — life without literature is death. He was indifferent to mathematics and mediocre in metaphysics; but in moral and religious truth, as well as in historical investigations, he showed marked aptitude and proficiency. Desirous of excelling in oratory, he studied the ancient and modern orators, and united with some fellow-students in establishing a literary society, the purpose of which was to "cultivate the study of elocution and to prepare themselves, by the habits of extemporary discussion and debate, for conducting the business of popular assemblies."

In 1741 he entered the ministry and endeared himself to his people by his kindness, fidelity, and eloquence. He employed his leisure in historical researches and in 1759 published his "History of Scotland," which met with instantaneous success. Fourteen editions were called for during the author's life, and the work has taken permanent rank as a standard history. For a time he dreaded the rivalry of Hume, who in his "History of England" traversed in part the same ground. But his fears proved groundless; and it is highly creditable to these two great historians that their literary labors and successes did not in the least interrupt the course of their friendship. "I have not had in a long time," wrote Hume, "a more sen-

sible pleasure than the good reception of your History has given me within this fortnight."

In 1762 Robertson was elected Principal of the University of Edinburgh; but the cares of his new office did not silence his pen. After nine years of labor, he published his "History of Charles V.," which was everywhere received with great applause. "It is to you and Mr. Hume," wrote Voltaire, "that it belongs to write history. You are eloquent, learned, and impartial. I unite with Europe in esteeming you." The work was translated into French; and the remuneration received by the author is said to have been no less than four thousand pounds. Though hostile critics pointed out many inaccuracies of a minor character, the work retains its place as a splendid contribution to our historical literature.

Robertson concluded his series of splendid historical works with his "History of the Discovery and Settlement of America." His style is one of equable dignity. His integrity as a narrator is beyond all question. "In arranging and linking together into one harmonious whole the scattered parts of his subject," says a biographer, "he is eminently happy; and in delineating characters, manners, and scenery, in making vividly present to the mind that which he describes, he has few rivals and no superiors."

Edward Gibbon, the greatest of this triumvirate of historians, is reserved for more extended study.

One of the most remarkable phenomena in the literature of recent times is the romantic movement which originated in this period. A similar movement, known as the "Storm and Stress," manifested itself in Germany

about the same time. The same tendency followed a little later in France under the leadership of the great Victor Hugo. The romantic movement, which has been defined as liberalism in literature, is a reaction against the classicism of the age of Queen Anne. It is a breaking away from authority and a return to nature. It manifested itself in two particulars: first, a greater freedom in literary form; and, second, in a return to the past, particularly to an idealized age of chivalry in the Middle Ages. The rhymed couplet began to give place to blank verse, the Spenserian stanza, and the varied lyrical forms of the Elizabethan era. In criticism, fiction, and poetry there was an evident turning to the past.

In 1765 Bishop Percy published his "Reliques of English Poetry," a collection of old ballads that proved little less than an epoch-making book. The stirring force of these ballads, which sprang directly from the hearts of the people, increased dissatisfaction with the coldness of classical models. Thomas Warton's "History of English Poetry," published between 1774 and 1781, revealed the treasures of earlier English literature. In 1765 Horace Walpole laid the foundation of the modern romantic novel with his "Castle of Otranto," a wild extravagant story of "miracles, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural evils believed in during the Middle Ages." Two remarkable forgeries, which gave rise to much discussion in their day, were associated with the romantic tendency. The first was the "Poems of Ossian," put forth by James Macpherson in 1762 as a translation of a Gaelic bard of the third century. The other was the "Rowley Poems," written by a marvellous boy of seventeen, Thomas Chatter-

ton, and purporting to be the work of a priest of the fifteenth century.

Two other characteristics are to be noted in the poetry of this period. The first is the new interest in man, apart from class or rank. There is a new appreciation of the worth and dignity of human nature. This fact may be regarded as one of the manifestations of the democratic tendency of the age. In his famous "Elegy," Gray celebrates —

"The short and simple annals of the poor."

Goldsmith dwells on the various phases of humble life in "The Deserted Village"; and Burns, filled with the rising spirit of democracy, exclaims, —

"What tho' on hamely fare we dine,
Wear hodden gray, and a' that;
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine —
A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Their tinsel show, and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er sae poor,
Is king of men for a' that."

Nature, likewise, appears in a new relation. Instead of serving exclusively as a background for human interests, it is loved and studied for its own sake. Rural scenes and country life are frequently depicted. This tendency began, as we have seen, with Thomson's "Seasons." But his descriptions, though often minute and admirable, were too systematic and cold. He seems to have studied nature as a self-imposed task rather than from the drawings of a sympathetic love. In the "Minstrel" of James Beattie, published in 1771, we first meet with descriptions of nature

in the spirit of Wordsworth and more recent writers. The minstrel boy "knew great Nature's charms to prize."

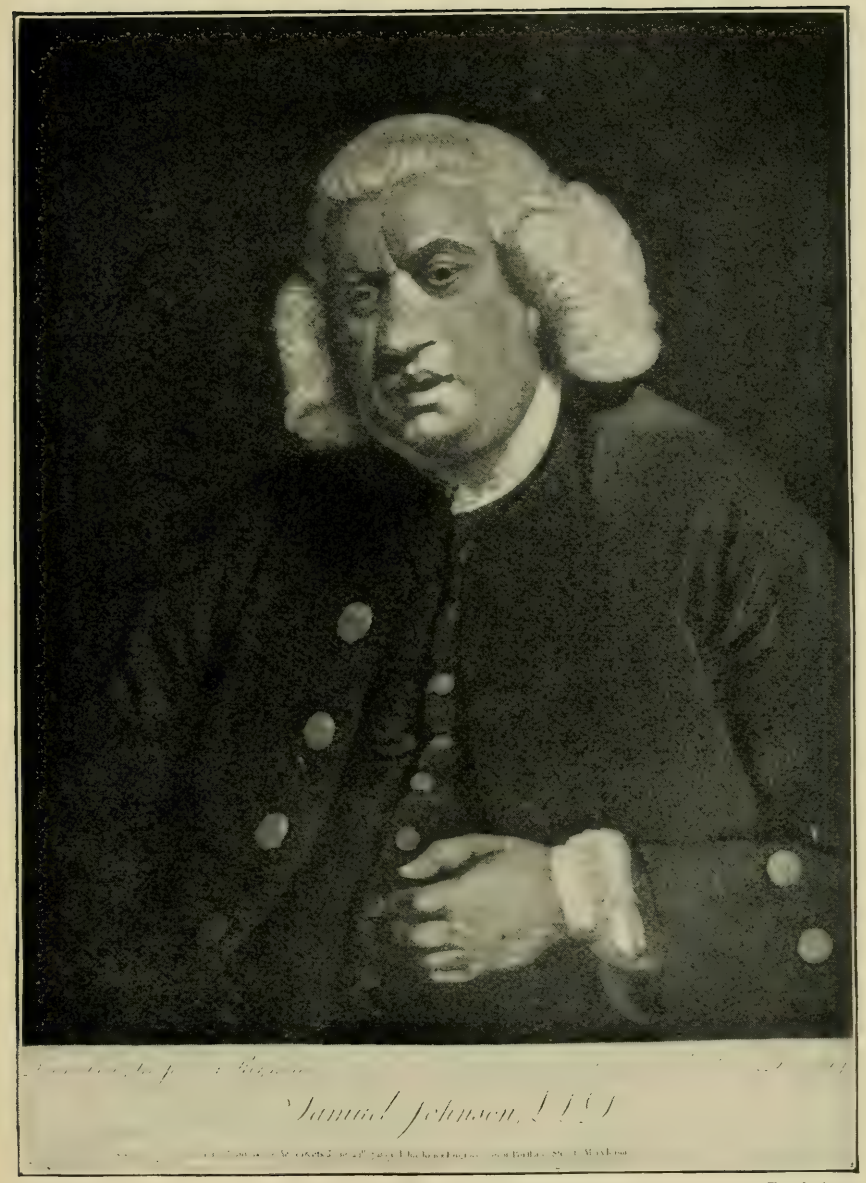
> "And oft the craggy cliff he loved to climb,
> When all in mist the world below was lost —
> What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
> Like shipwrecked mariner on desert coast,
> And view the enormous waste of vapor, tossed
> In billows, lengthening to the horizon round,
> Now scooped in gulfs, with mountains now embossed,
> And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound;
> Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound!"

The same love of nature, as we shall see, is found in Goldsmith, Cowper, and Burns.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

THERE is no other English author with whom we are so intimately acquainted. Through the hero-worship of his biographer Boswell, we are permitted to see and hear him as he appeared in the circle of his most intimate friends. We get close to the man as he actually was. We know his prejudices, foibles, and peculiarities; and, strange to say, this minute acquaintance does not lessen, but increases our admiration and love. He was a piece of rugged Alpine manhood. But his towering greatness was softened by a benevolence that never failed to reach out a helping hand to the needy; and his brusqueness of manner was relieved by an integrity of character that scorned every form of hypocrisy. In the midst of so much pettiness and cant, it is delightful to contemplate his sturdy uprightness and independence; as Carlyle said of Luther, "A true son of nature and fact, for whom these centuries, and many that are to come yet, will be thankful to Heaven."

His peculiarities of person and manner are well known. He was ponderous in body as in intellect. A scrofulous affection, for which Queen Anne had laid royal hands upon him, had disfigured his face, and also tinged his mind, perhaps, with whim and melancholy. He had a rolling walk, and made it a habit to touch the posts as he passed. His appetite for tea was enormous; and he ate with an absorbing interest that might properly be called ravenous.



Engraved by William Doughty after the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, London. Published, 1793.

Sam. Johnson.

His sight was defective; but when Reynolds painted him with a pen held close to his eye, he protested that he did not want to descend to posterity as "blinking Sam." He was singularly insensible to music; and when a musical performance was praised as being difficult, he simply said that he wished it had been impossible. After he had published his dictionary he was once with a friend at the top of a hill. "I haven't had a roll for a long time," said the great lexicographer; and, emptying his pockets, he stretched himself on the ground, turning over and over, like a barrel, till he reached the bottom.

But in spite of physical defects and eccentric manners, he dominated, by the sheer force of genius, the most brilliant club of London and became the most imposing literary figure of his age. In conversation he was ready and eloquent, though apt to bear down an opponent by mere vociferation or savage personality. "There is no arguing with Johnson," said Goldsmith; "for if his pistol misses fire, he knocks you down with the but-end of it." He looked upon conversation as an intellectual wrestling and delighted in it as a skilled and powerful athlete. "That fellow," he once said when sick, "calls forth all my powers. Were I to see Burke now, it would kill me."

He sometimes offended his friends by his rude personalities; but his repentance was so prompt and genuine that he was speedily forgiven. He set a high value on friendship, which, he said, one ought to keep in constant repair. "I look upon a day as lost," he said in his later years, "in which I do not make a new acquaintance." With all his clearness of judgment and honesty of purpose, he was sometimes narrow and prejudiced in his opinions. Not

everything he says is to be taken as true, though expressed in the most dogmatic way. "No man but a blockhead," he said, "ever wrote except for money." His principles as a Tory and Churchman sometimes warped his literary criticism. Upon the death of Dr. Bathurst, a friend of his earlier years, he said: "Dear Bathurst was a man to my very heart's content; he hated a fool, and he hated a rogue, and he hated a Whig; he was a very good hater."

Samuel Johnson was born at Lichfield in 1709, the son of a bookseller of considerable ability and reputation. As a boy he was fond of athletic exercises, in which he excelled; and he possessed a constitutional fearlessness that made him a natural leader. At the grammar school of his native town he acquired the rudiments of Latin under a stern discipline. Though he afterward complained of the severity of his teachers, he remained a believer in the virtues of the rod. "A child that is flogged," he said, "gets his task, and there's an end on't; whereas by exciting emulation and comparisons of superiority, you lay the foundations of lasting mischief; you make brothers and sisters hate each other."

He left school at sixteen and spent the next two years at home, probably learning his father's business. He continued his studies, became a good Latin scholar, and accumulated large stores of general information. He was a voracious reader. In 1728 he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, with an unusual store of knowledge. He suffered from poverty, and at the end of three years he left the university without taking a degree. Attacks of melancholy sometimes drove him to the verge of insanity. When reminded in after years that he had been "a gay

and frolicsome fellow," he replied: "Ah, sir, I was mad and violent. It was bitterness which they mistook for frolic. I was miserably poor, and I thought to fight my way by my literature and my wit; so I disregarded all power and all authority." In his poverty he remained proud; and when a new pair of shoes was placed at his door by some benevolent person, he ungraciously flung them away.

In 1731 he left the university to make his way in the world. For the next thirty years his life was a constant struggle with poverty and hardship. Though of a deeply religious nature, he did not turn to the church for a living. He tried teaching, and failed. At the age of twenty-six he married a fat, gaudy widow of forty-eight. To Johnson's defective sight she always remained a "pretty creature," while she had discernment enough to see the worth and ability of her husband. Though his declaration, that "it was a love match on both sides," is apt to meet with some incredulity, the marriage did not prove an unhappy one, and there is something pathetic in the tenderness with which he always referred to her.

In 1737 he went to London with three or four guineas and half of the tragedy of "Irene" in his pocket. Literature at this time did not offer an inviting field. It generally meant poorly paid hack-work for publishers. Long afterward, in recalling the trials of this period, Johnson burst into tears. One of the publishers to whom he applied for work advised him, after surveying his athletic frame, to get a "porter's knot and carry trunks." He was often in want of food, clothes, and lodging. In these days of precarious livelihood he was befriended by Harry Her-

vey, toward whom he ever afterward cherished a lively sense of gratitude. "Harry Hervey," he said shortly before his death, "was a vicious man, but very kind to me. If you call a dog Hervey, I shall love him."

Notwithstanding his dependent condition, he did not become obsequious. His feeling of manly independence and self-respect never deserted him. He was employed once by Osborne to make a catalogue of the Harleian Library. Reproved by his employer in an offensive manner for negligence, Johnson knocked him down with a huge Greek folio.

The year after his arrival in London, we find him at work on the *Gentleman's Magazine*, a periodical of wide circulation. His most important contributions were his reports of the proceedings of Parliament, which the publisher, as a measure of precaution, sent forth as "Reports of the Debates of the Senate of Lilliput." He was furnished with notes, generally meagre and inaccurate; and on these as a basis it was his business to write the speeches. He did the work marvellously well. Many years afterward one of Pitt's speeches was pronounced superior to anything in Demosthenes. Johnson replied, "I wrote that speech in a garret in Exeter Street." When his impartiality was once praised in a friendly company, he answered with charming frankness, "That is not quite true; I saved appearances pretty well, but I took care that the Whig dogs should not have the best of it."

In 1738 appeared a poem entitled "London," an imitation of the third satire of Juvenal. It met with a favorable reception; and though it brought the author only ten guineas in money, it served to direct attention to him as

a man of genius. It was published anonymously; but Pope declared on reading it that the author could not long remain concealed. Its general theme is found in the following lines, which were written doubtless with all the conviction of bitter experience: —

> "This mournful truth is everywhere confessed,
> Slow rises worth by poverty depressed;
> But here more slow, where all are slaves to gold;
> Where looks are merchandise and smiles are sold;
> Where, won by bribes, by flatteries implored,
> The groom retails the favors of his lord."

Another work appearing in 1744 added much to Johnson's reputation. One of his Grub Street acquaintances was Richard Savage, a man of noble birth but profligate life. In spite of an insolent manner, he was of agreeable companionship and wide experience. He had passed through great vicissitudes of fortune; and on his death, Johnson wrote his life in a masterly manner. "No finer specimen of literary biography," says Macaulay, "existed in any language, living or dead." It had the effect of pretty well establishing Johnson's fame.

In 1747 he was applied to by several eminent booksellers to prepare a "Dictionary of the English Language." The remuneration agreed upon was fifteen hundred guineas. The plan was issued and addressed to Lord Chesterfield, the most polished man of his time. This distinguished lord had at one time given the burly scholar encouragement; but repelled at last by his boorishness of manner, he had politely shaken him off. He characterized Johnson as a "respectable Hottentot, who throws his meat anywhere but down his throat." "This

absurd person," he says again, "was not only uncouth in manners and warm in dispute, but behaved exactly in the same way to superiors, equals, and inferiors; and therefore, by a necessary consequence, absurdly to two of the three." Johnson's opinion of Chesterfield contained just as little flattery. He denounced that nobleman's "Letters" as teaching the morals of a harlot and the manners of a dancing-master. At another time he said, "I thought this man had been a lord among wits; but I find he is only a wit among lords."

After seven years of drudgery Johnson brought his work to a close. In hopes of having it dedicated to himself, Chesterfield took occasion to recommend it in two letters published in the *World*, a periodical to which men of rank and fashion frequently contributed. The proud scholar was not to be appeased; and his reply was terrific — "the far-famed blast of doom proclaiming into the ear of Lord Chesterfield," says Carlyle, "and through him of the listening world, that patronage should be no more." "Is not a patron, my lord," wrote Johnson, "one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and when he has reached the ground encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labors, had it been earlier, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity not to confess obligations where no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the public should consider me as owing that to a patron which Providence has enabled me to do for myself."

Johnson defined a lexicographer as a "harmless drudge." This is fairly descriptive of the nature of his work, which consisted in collecting, defining, and illustrating all the words in the language. Judged by present high standards, the work is defective. Scientific etymology was not yet in existence. But it far surpassed anything before it and was received with enthusiasm by the English people.

Johnson's energies were not wholly expended on the drudgery of the "Dictionary." In 1749 he published another imitation of Juvenal, entitled the "Vanity of Human Wishes." It is written with much vigor, and in passages surpasses the original. The vanity of the warrior's pride is illustrated by Charles XII. of Sweden: —

> "He left a name at which the world grew pale
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale."

To the ambitious scholar he says: —

> "Deign on the passing world to turn thine eyes,
> And pause awhile from letters to be wise;
> There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
> Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.
> See nations, slowly wise, and meanly just,
> To buried merit raise the tardy bust.
> If dreams yet flatter, once again attend,
> Hear Lydiat's life and Galileo's end."

The poem brought him little besides a growing reputation. A few days after the publication of the "Vanity of Human Wishes" his tragedy of "Irene" was brought upon the stage by Garrick. It was heard with respectful attention. After running nine nights, it was withdrawn, and has never since been acted. "When Johnson writes

tragedy," said Garrick, "declamation roars and passion sleeps; when Shakespeare wrote he dipped his pen in his own heart." Johnson took the failure of his tragedy with philosophical calmness. It brought him all together about three hundred pounds, in which no doubt he found substantial consolation.

In 1750 he began the publication of the *Rambler*, a periodical resembling the *Spectator*. It appeared twice a week for two years. The range of subjects is wide and interesting. The prevailing tone is serious and moral. Though coldly received at the time of first issue, yet afterward collected into volumes, the papers had an extraordinary circulation. No fewer than ten editions appeared during the author's life.

His style is characterized by an artificial stateliness and a preponderance of Latin words. "I have labored," he says in the closing paper, "to refine our language to grammatical purity and to clear it from colloquial barbarisms, licentious idioms, and irregular combinations. Something, perhaps, I have added to the elegance of its construction and something to the harmony of its cadence." He lacked the delicate touch of Addison. Of his moral aim he says: "The essays professedly serious, if I have been able to execute my own intentions, will be found exactly conformable to the precepts of Christianity, without any accommodation to the licentiousness and levity of the present age. I therefore look back on this part of my work with pleasure, which no praise or blame of man can diminish or augment. I shall never envy the honors which wit and learning obtain in any other cause, if I can be numbered among the writers who have given ardor to

virtue and confidence to truth." The *Rambler* is a delightful book with which to spend an occasional half hour. It is filled with sober wisdom, and some of the papers are singularly beautiful.

In 1759 Johnson's mother died at Lichfield at the age of ninety. He was still involved in financial troubles. In order to gain money for her funeral expenses, he wrote in a single week the story of "Rasselas." It is his most popular work. Its main theme is announced in the opening sentence: "Ye who listen with credulity to the whispers of fancy, and pursue with eagerness the phantoms of hope; who expect that age will perform the promises of youth, and that the deficiencies of the present day will be supplied by the morrow; attend to the history of Rasselas, prince of Abyssinia." The story makes no pretensions to historical accuracy; the Abyssinians brought before us are in reality highly cultivated Europeans. But it is written with Johnson's peculiar eloquence and exhibits fully his moral and reflective temperament.

The year 1762 saw an important change in Johnson's condition. He received a pension of three hundred pounds a year. In his "Dictionary" he had defined a pension as "generally understood to mean pay given to a state hireling for treason to his country." Being assured that he did not come within the definition, and that the pension was accorded in recognition of past services, he accepted it after some hesitation. It placed him for the first time in circumstances of independence, and allowed him to indulge his constitutional indolence. He talked at night and slept during the day, rising at two in the afternoon. "I cannot now curse the House of Hanover," he said in

appreciative reference to his pension; "but I think that the pleasure of cursing the House of Hanover and drinking King James's health, all amply overbalanced by three hundred pounds a year."

No longer driven by necessity, his pen became less busy. His principal influence was exerted through conversation. His colloquial powers were of the highest order. In the Club, which included, among others, Goldsmith, Burke, Reynolds, and Garrick, he was easily first. The opinion of the Club carried great weight; and for a time his position might be described as literary dictator of England. Meeting the king one day in the royal library, he was asked by his Majesty if he intended to give the world any more of his compositions. "I think I have written enough," said Johnson. "And I should think so too," replied his Majesty, "if you had not written so well" — a compliment of which Johnson was very proud.

In 1773 Johnson made a journey to the Hebrides. He was kindly received on his journey through Scotland. His prejudices against the Scotch were softened to a harmless foible. He made inquiries concerning the poems of Ossian. He denounced Macpherson's work as a forgery. Receiving a furious and threatening letter from the author of "Ossian," Johnson replied: "I hope I shall never be deterred from detecting what I think a cheat by the menaces of a ruffian." In anticipation of personal violence, he provided himself with a heavy stick, of which, had occasion offered, he would doubtless have made vigorous use.

The results of this trip are given in a pleasant volume entitled "Journey to the Hebrides." The style is, as usual,

elaborate and stately. Writing to an intimate friend from the Hebrides, he says with colloquial ease and pith, "When we were taken upstairs, a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed on which one of us was to lie." In the book this incident is translated into his artificial literary style as follows: "Out of one of the beds on which we were to repose, started up, at our entrance, a man black as a Cyclops from the forge."

In 1777 a number of London booksellers decided to publish a collection of English poetry. Johnson was asked to prepare the introductory biographical and critical sketches. The result was his "Lives of the Poets," the work, perhaps, by which he will be longest known. In the judgment of Macaulay it is more interesting than any novel. In many respects it is an admirable production. Without much patient research after biographical material, it gives the leading facts in the life of each poet, together with a masterly analysis of his character and a critical examination of his works. It is less ponderous in style than his earlier writings. That it is independent in judgment goes without saying. His criticisms, always worth attention, are not always just. He was sometimes influenced by his prejudices, as in the case of Milton and Gray; and he attached too much importance to the logical and didactic elements of poetry. He had no ear for the music of poetry; and that subtle, ethereal quality, which raises it above prose, could not be grasped by his clumsy critical principles.

One of the great charms of the "Lives of the Poets" consists in the shrewd observations upon life and character with which the book abounds. Discussing Dryden's financial difficulties, he remarks: "It is well known that he sel-

dom lives frugally who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal, and they that trust her promises make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of the morrow." The work contains the materials for a collection of maxims as interesting as those of La Rochefoucauld and much more truthful. "Very near to admiration," he says, "is the wish to admire." The rich treasures of wisdom, which long experience and reflection had stored in his spacious mind, are scattered through his pages with lavish hand.

Much of interest in Johnson's life is necessarily omitted: the strange crowd of dependents he maintained at his home; his relation with the Thrales; a great store of interesting anecdote preserved to us by his satellite Boswell. Though for a time oppressed with a dread of death, he met it, as the end drew near, with manly courage. In his last sickness he was visited by many of his old friends. "I am afraid," said Burke, "that so many of us must be oppressive to you." — "No, sir, it is not so," replied Johnson; "and I must be in a wretched state indeed when your company would not be a delight to me." — "You have always been too good to me," said Burke, with a breaking voice, as he parted from his old friend for the last time. Now and then there was a flash of the old vigor and humor. Describing a man who sat up with him, he said: "Sir, the fellow's an idiot; he's as awkward as a turnspit when first put into the wheel, and as sleepy as a dormouse." His last words were a benediction. A young lady begged his blessing. "God bless you, my dear," he said with infinite tenderness. Nothing could have been more characteristic of his great, benevolent heart. He peacefully died

Dec. 13, 1784. He had once playfully said to Goldsmith, when visiting the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey,

"Forsitan et nostrum nomen miscebitur istis."[1]

The prediction and the wish were fulfilled. And among the wise and great who repose there, there is no one whose massive intellect, honest worth, and great heart command our admiration and love in a higher degree than Samuel Johnson.

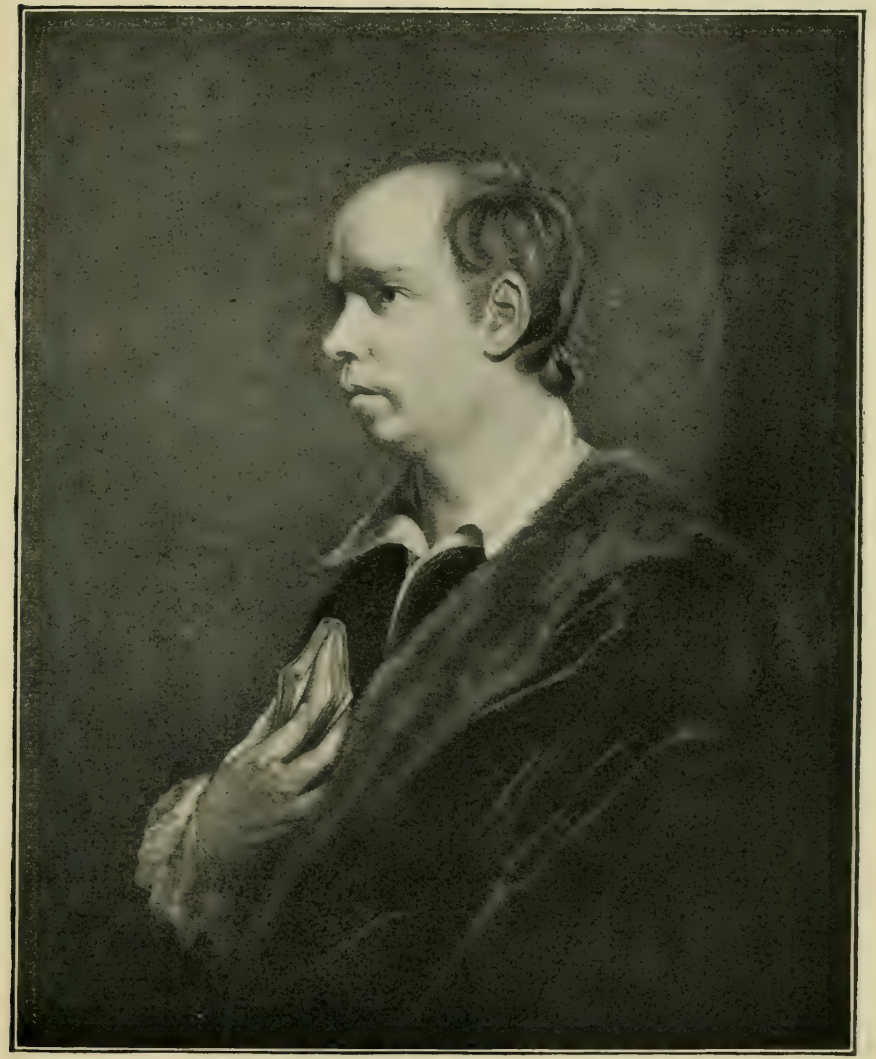
[1] Perhaps our names will be mingled with them.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

A STRANGE combination of weakness and strength, of genius and folly. "Inspired idiot" is the terrific phrase with which Horace Walpole once described him. It is a gross caricature indeed, but having truth enough at bottom to be perpetuated. Goldsmith belonged to a literary club, the members of which occasionally dined together. Goldsmith was usually one of the last to arrive. While waiting for him one day, the company playfully composed a number of epitaphs on "the *late* Mr. Goldsmith." The epitaph by Garrick, the celebrated actor, has been preserved as a happy hit: —

> "Here lies poet Goldsmith, for shortness called Noll,
> Who wrote like an angel and talked like poor Poll."

There are other anecdotes illustrating Goldsmith's awkwardness in conversation. He greatly lacked self-confidence and had a faculty for blundering. His friends sometimes took advantage of his weaknesses and for amusement tricked him into saying and doing absurd things. He has suffered also from thick-headed critics, who have sometimes misunderstood his delicate humor. Boswell, who was no friendly critic, but who reported facts truthfully, says: "It has been generally circulated and believed that Goldsmith was a mere fool in conversation; but in truth, this has been greatly exaggerated." In spite of his deficiencies, he sometimes got the better of Dr. John-



Engraved in mezzotint by Joseph Marchi after the painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds, London. Published, 1770.

Oliver Goldsmith

son, the clearest and strongest talker of his time. Talking of fables once, Goldsmith remarked that the animals introduced seldom talked in character. "For instance," he said, "take the fable of the little fishes who saw birds fly over their heads, and envying them, petitioned Jupiter to be changed into birds. The skill consists in making them talk like little fishes." Dr. Johnson took exception to the remark. "Ah, Doctor," he replied, "this is not so easy as you may think; for if you were to make little fishes talk, they would talk like whales."

But we turn to his life. Scarcely any other English author has put into his writings so much of his character and experience. Oliver Goldsmith was born at Pallas in the county of Longford, Ireland, in 1728, the son of a Protestant clergyman. About two years later his father moved to the village of Lissoy in the county of Westmeath, where he enjoyed a better living. An unusual interest is connected with that home. The amiable piety, learned simplicity, and guileless wisdom of his father are portrayed in the immortal "Vicar of Wakefield." It was a fireside where a Christian benevolence was inculcated and practised. The memories of this home never left Goldsmith; and years afterward, in his "Deserted Village," he gave a famous description of "the village preacher's modest mansion": —

> "A man he was to all the country dear,
> And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
> Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
> Nor e'er had changed, nor wished to change his place."

At the age of six years Goldsmith was sent to the village school taught by Thomas Byrne, an old soldier with a large

stock of stories. Of him also we have a portrait in the "Deserted Village": —

> "A man severe he was, and stern to view,
> I knew him well, and every truant knew:
> Well had the boding tremblers learned to trace
> The day's disasters in his morning face.
> Full well they laughed with counterfeited glee
> At all his jokes, for many a joke had he;
> Full well the busy whisper circling round,
> Conveyed the dismal tidings when he frowned."

As a pupil he was dull — a stupid blockhead he was thought to be; but his amiability and thoughtless generosity, which characterized him all through life, made him popular with his schoolmates. An incident that occurred in his sixteenth year not only throws light upon his character, but also shows the origin of his most famous comedy. He was returning home from Edgeworthstown, where he had been attending school. He had borrowed a horse for the journey and received from a friend a guinea. He at once began to put on airs and to affect the gentleman. Arriving in a village at nightfall, he inquired for the best house in the place and was directed by a wag to the private house of a gentleman of fortune. Accordingly he rode up to what he supposed to be an inn, ordered his horse to be taken to the stable, walked into the parlor, seated himself by the fire, and demanded what he could have for supper. The gentleman of the house, discovering his mistake, concluded to humor him, and gave him the freedom of the house for the evening. He was highly elated. When supper was served, he insisted that the landlord, his wife, and daughter should eat with him, and

ordered a bottle of wine to crown the repast. When next morning he discovered his blunder, his sense of humiliation can easily be imagined. With the literary instinct that turned all his experiences to account, he dramatized this incident many years afterward in "She Stoops to Conquer; or, The Mistakes of a Night." Throughout his life, as in this case, the possession of money made a fool of him.

In his seventeenth year Goldsmith entered Trinity College, Dublin, as a sizar. This relation was naturally repugnant to his timid and sensitive nature. His tutor was ill-tempered and harsh; some studies, especially mathematics and logic, were distasteful to him. His social nature betrayed him into a neglect of his studies, and his love of fun got him into trouble. Having once gained a prize of thirty shillings, he gave a dance at his room to some young men and women of the city. This was a violation of the college rules; and his tutor, attracted by the sound of the fiddle, rushed to the scene of festivity, gave Goldsmith a thrashing, and turned his guests out of doors.

An anecdote, belonging to this period, illustrates the tender heart and inconsiderate benevolence that characterized his whole life. He had been invited to breakfast by a college friend, and, failing to make his appearance, was visited at his room. There he was found in bed, buried in feathers up to his chin. The evening before, a woman with five children had told him a pitiful tale of her distress and need. It was too much for his sympathetic nature; and bringing the woman to the college gate, he gave her the blankets off his bed and a part of his

clothing to sell and buy bread. Getting cold in the night, he ripped open his bed and buried himself in the feathers.

In due course he took his bachelor's degree and returned to his home. It had been sadly changed by the death of his father. The next two or three years were spent in a desultory way; while ostensibly preparing to take orders, he was in reality spending his time in miscellaneous reading and rustic convivialities. He did not like the clerical profession. "To be obliged to wear a long wig when I liked a short one," he says in explanation of his antipathy, "or a black coat when I generally dressed in brown, I thought such a restraint upon my liberty that I absolutely rejected the proposal."

His fondness for gay dress was a weakness throughout his life and more than once exposed him to ridicule. When the time for his examination came, he appeared before the Bishop of Elphin arrayed in scarlet breeches. This silly breach of propriety cost him the good opinion of the bishop and led to his rejection.

Then followed a succession of undertakings and failures without parallel. He became tutor in a good family and lost his position on account of a quarrel at cards. He then resolved to emigrate to America and left for Dublin mounted on a good horse and having thirty guineas in his pocket. In six weeks he returned to his mother's door in a condition not unlike that of the prodigal son. Every penny was gone. He explained that the ship on which he had engaged passage had sailed while he was at a party of pleasure. The ship had been waiting for a favorable wind; "and you know, mother," he said, "that I could not command the elements."

His uncle Contarine, who was one of the few that had not lost all confidence in him, gave him fifty pounds with which to go to London for the purpose of studying law. He reached Dublin on his way ; but unfortunately he met an old acquaintance, who allured him into a gambling house. He came out penniless.

He was next advised to try medicine ; and a small purse having been made up for him, he set out for Edinburgh. He remained there eighteen months, during which he picked up a little medical science. But most of his time was spent in convivial habits. With gaming, feasting, and reckless generosity, he was often brought into financial difficulties.

Then he went to Leyden, ostensibly for the purpose of completing his medical studies, but really, there is reason to believe, for the purpose of gratifying his roving disposition. He spent a year in that city with his usual improvidence. A friend provided him with money to go to Paris. The mania for tulip culture still prevailed in Holland. One day, wandering through a garden, Goldsmith suddenly recollected that his uncle Contarine, his steadfast benefactor, was a tulip fancier. Here, then, was an opportunity to show his appreciation. A number of choice and costly bulbs were purchased; and not till after he had paid for them did he reflect that he had spent all the money designed for his travelling expenses. In this extremity he set out on foot with his flute. "I had some knowledge of music," says the Philosophic Vagabond in the "Vicar of Wakefield," "with a tolerable voice; I now turned what was once my amusement into a present means of subsistence. I passed among the harmless peasants of

Flanders and among such of the French as were poor enough to be merry; for I ever found them sprightly in proportion to their wants. Whenever I approached a peasant's house, I played one of my merriest tunes, and that procured me not only a lodging, but subsistence for the next day." In this way he was able to make the tour of Europe, visiting Flanders, France, Switzerland, Germany, and Italy. At Padua he is said to have taken his medical degree. These travels, as we shall see, were afterward to be turned to good account.

In 1756 he returned to England. "You may easily imagine," he wrote to a friend afterward, "what difficulties I had to encounter, left as I was without friends, recommendations, money, or impudence, and that in a country where being an Irishman was sufficient to keep me unemployed. Many in such circumstances would have had recourse to a friar's cord or the suicide's halter. But, with all my follies, I had principle to resist the one and resolution to combat the other."

He went to London, where for the next several years he led an existence miserable enough. He became successively an usher in a school, an apothecary's assistant, a practising physician — and failed in them all. At last, after other unlucky ventures, he settled down to the drudgery of a literary hack. From this humiliating station he was lifted by the force of genius alone.

He began by writing for reviews and magazines, and compiling easy histories. His first serious undertaking was "An Inquiry into the State of Learning in Europe," with which his career as an author may be said to begin. His work gradually gained recognition and brought him

better pay. His circle of acquaintance widened and included the most distinguished literary talent of his time. Burke had discovered his genius; Percy, afterward Bishop of Dromore, sought him out in his garret; and most important of all, Johnson, the great Cham, as he has been humorously styled, sought his acquaintance. He had met Reynolds and Hogarth. In 1763 he became one of the original nine members of the Club, which included among others Johnson, Reynolds, and Burke, and to which were added subsequently Garrick and Boswell. He was thus brought into intimate fellowship with the choicest minds of the English metropolis.

Having attracted their notice by the humor, grace, and picturesqueness of his style in writing, he won their affection by the guilelessness and amiability of his character. There was a charm in his personality that triumphed over his weaknesses and drew the strongest and best men to him in tender friendship. That same charm exists in his works; and with the possible exception of Addison, he is, what Thackeray claims for him, "the most beloved of English writers."

The lesson of economy he never learned. His growing income had enabled him to take better lodgings. But in 1764 we find him in arrears for his board and in the hands of the sheriff. He sent for Johnson. "I sent him a guinea," says Johnson, "and promised to come to him directly. I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed and found that his landlady had arrested him for rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea and got a bottle of Madeira and a glass before him. I put the cork into

the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he might be extricated. He then told me that he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it and saw its merit; told the landlady I should return soon; and having gone to a bookseller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating his landlady in a high tone for having treated him so ill." But speedily relenting, he called her to share in a bowl of punch.

The novel in question was no other than the "Vicar of Wakefield" — "one of the most delicious morsels of fictitious composition," justly observes Sir Walter Scott, "on which the human mind was ever employed." The plot is indeed faulty; but the charm of the characters, the ludicrousness of the situations, the grace of style, and the delicacy of humor make it a book which we read with delight in youth and return to with pleasure in maturity and old age. Notwithstanding its high rank as a work of genius, the stupid publisher kept it in hand two years before venturing to give it to the public.

In 1764, while the "Vicar of Wakefield" was being held by the publisher, Goldsmith published a poem called the "Traveller." It was the first work to which he attached his name. The time was favorable for its appearance, inasmuch as the British Muse was doing but little. Johnson kindly lent his assistance in bringing it out, reading over the proof-sheets, and adding here and there a line. The merits of the poem were soon recognized, and the general opinion agreed that nothing better had appeared since the time of Pope. Goldsmith dedicated it to his brother: —

"Where'er I roam, whatever realms to see,
My heart untravelled fondly turns to thee;
Still to my brother turns, with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthening chain."

It embodies the observations of his tour on the Continent; but —

"Vain, very vain, my weary search to find
That bliss which only centres in the mind:
Why have I strayed from pleasure and repose
To seek a good each government bestows?
In every government, though tyrants reign,
Though tyrant kings, or tyrant laws restrain,
How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure?
Still to ourselves in every place consigned,
Our own felicity we make or find;
With secret course, which no loud storms annoy,
Glides the smooth current of domestic joy."

The Earl of Northumberland read the poem and was greatly pleased with it. He sent for Goldsmith; and after stating that he had been appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, he expressed a willingness to do the poet any kindness in his power. Goldsmith's genius for blundering did not desert him. He said that he had a brother in Ireland that needed help; but as for himself, he did not place much dependence in the promises of the great and looked to the booksellers for a support.

Goldsmith continued to do hack writing for the booksellers, but did not neglect original composition. In 1768 appeared his comedy of "The Good-Natured Man." It was refused by Garrick, notwithstanding the intercession of Reynolds, and was brought out at Covent Garden. It

did not gain the applause it merited, but as a financial venture it was a success. It was acted for nine nights; and, including the copyright, it brought the author no less than five hundred pounds. That was a dangerous sum for a man of his improvident habits. He at once rented elegant lodgings, at a cost of four hundred pounds, and gave dinners to Johnson, Reynolds, and other friends of note. His chambers were often the scene of gay festivities; and Blackstone, who occupied rooms immediately below, and was engaged on his "Commentaries," used to complain of the racket overhead. At this rate his means were, of course, soon exhausted.

His labors for the booksellers included his "Animated Nature," "History of Rome," "History of England," and "History of Greece." These compilations were hardly worthy of his genius, but they brought him the means of livelihood. "I cannot afford to court the draggle-tail muses," he once said; "they would let me starve; but by my other labors I can make shift to eat, and drink, and have good clothes." But even his compilations bore the trace of his genius in the clear arrangement of facts and in his felicitous mode of treatment. "Whether, indeed, we take him as a poet, as a comic writer, or as an historian," declared Johnson, "he stands in the first class."

In 1770 appeared the "Deserted Village." In this he cast a glory around his native village, to which, as he approached the end of his life, his mind reverted with peculiar tenderness. The political economy presented is indeed false; but the pictures the poem brings before us are as enduring as the language. Every one is acquainted with Paddy Byrne:—

"In arguing, too, the parson owned his skill;
For e'en though vanquished, he could argue still."

And then the village preacher — a portrait of Goldsmith's father and his brother Henry. It is one of the most delightful descriptions in the English language, rivalled alone by Chaucer's parson: —

"And as a bird each fond endearment tries
To tempt its new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way."

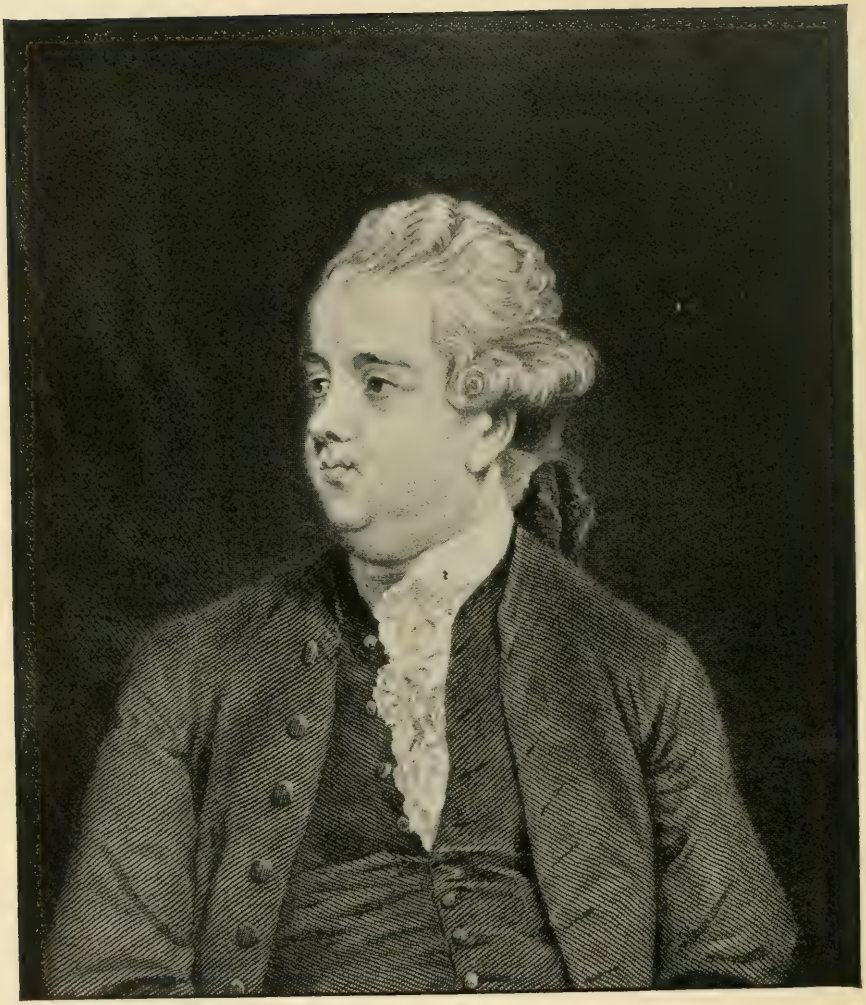
The poem was at once successful and has since retained, through all changes of taste, its place as a classic.

In 1773 he gave his comedy, "She Stoops to Conquer," to the public. The plot turns on an incident suggested by his blunder as a schoolboy. The theatrical manager predicted a complete failure, and Goldsmith was in great distress. But the night of the first presentation the theatre was filled; and the humorous dialogue and the ridiculous incidents kept the audience in a roar of laughter. It has since retained its place on the stage.

During the last years of his life Goldsmith's income was about four hundred pounds a year. With a little economy this would have enabled him to live in comfort and ease. But his extravagance and heedless benevolence left him in debt.

The end came April 3, 1784. When the news was brought to Burke, he burst into tears. Sir Joshua Reynolds laid aside his pencil. But more significant than all was the lamentation of the old and the infirm on his stairs — helpless creatures to whose supplications he had never

turned a deaf ear. Johnson wrote his epitaph, in which it is said that he "left scarcely any style of writing untouched, and touched nothing that he did not adorn." In the words of Thackeray: "Think of him reckless, thriftless, vain if you like — but merciful, gentle, generous, full of love and pity. He passes out of our life and goes to render his account beyond it. Think of the poor pensioners weeping at his grave; think of the noble spirits that admired and deplored him; think of the righteous pen that wrote his epitaph — and the wonderful and unanimous response of affection with which the world has paid back the love he gave it. His humor delighting us still; his song fresh and beautiful as when he first charmed with it; his words in all our mouths; his very weaknesses beloved and familiar — his benevolent spirit seems still to smile upon us; to do gentle kindnesses; to succor with sweet charity; to caress, to sooth, and forgive; to plead with the fortunate for the unhappy and the poor."



From a painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

E. Gibbon.

EDWARD GIBBON.

THE treatment of any great historical subject demands at once wealth and leisure. It is only under these conditions that the historian, no matter what may be his genius, is able to collect and digest the large amount of material that now enters into our best historical works. The most eminent historians of modern times have been men of ample means; and aspiring genius, if fettered by poverty, had better seek its conquests in fiction or poetry rather than in history.

Gibbon is chief of the historians of the eighteenth century. Hume and Robertson are generally classed with him, though their works have, in large measure, been superseded. Taken together, they formed the modern school of history. Previous historical writing was chiefly imaginative. It was concerned with a pleasing narrative rather than with actual truth. But the historical writing of the eighteenth century became more philosophical. It took broader views, inquired more after causes, and carefully traced results. It aimed to recreate the past, and to this end it relied less upon the imagination than upon research. The basis of Gibbon's great work is a scholarship, the breadth and accuracy of which command our admiration.

Not the least interesting and instructive of Gibbon's writings is his "Autobiography," written, as he tells us, for his own amusement. He affirms the unblushing truth

of his narrative; and though this may be questioned, he has undoubtedly presented a tolerably complete and faithful picture of himself. He felt what he regarded as a natural interest in his ancestors, and traced them back to the early part of the fourteenth century, when they had landed possessions in the county of Kent. One of them was architect to Edward III. and built "the stately castle of Queensborough"; another was Lord High Treasurer in the reign of Henry VI.; still another resided for a time in Virginia, where, observing the tattooing of the Indians, he "exceedingly wondered and concluded that heraldry was ingrafted *naturally* into the sense of the human race." His immediate ancestors were tradesmen in London, where they acquired considerable wealth. His father was a member of Parliament, where he acted with the Tories, to whom "he gave many a vote," and with whom "he drank many a bottle."

Edward Gibbon was born in the county of Surrey, April 27, 1737, the oldest of seven children and the only one to survive infancy. His own health was so feeble that his life was often despaired of. He was saved only by the tender assiduity of a maiden aunt, whom he ever afterward held in grateful remembrance. "A life of celibacy transferred her vacant affection to her sister's first child; my weakness excited her pity; her attachment was fortified by labor and success; and if there be any, as I trust there are some, who rejoice that I live, to that dear and excellent woman they must hold themselves indebted."

He mastered the arts of reading, writing, and arithmetic at an early age. He showed great precocity in

figures; and it was his opinion that, had he persevered, he might have acquired some fame in mathematical studies. His earliest tutor was the Rev. John Kirby, an author of some reputation. In his ninth year he entered the school at Kingston-upon-Thames. His delicate rearing had prepared him neither for the strict discipline nor the rougher games of the school. "By the common methods of discipline," he says, "at the expense of many tears and some blood, I purchased the knowledge of Latin syntax." But his studies were interrupted by sickness, and after a real or nominal residence of two years at Kingston School he was finally recalled by the death of his mother.

He again passed under the care of his devoted aunt, to whom he ascribes his early and invincible love of reading, which seemed to him more precious than the treasures of India. At Kingston School he had already become familiar with Pope's "Homer" and the "Arabian Nights"; and he now eagerly perused poetry and romance, history and travels. In 1749 he entered Westminster School, which, he remarks, did "not exactly correspond with the precept of a Spartan king, 'that the child should be instructed in the arts which will be useful to the man.'" His progress was not rapid. "In the space of two years," to borrow his own words, "interrupted by danger and debility, I painfully climbed into the third form; and my riper age was left to acquire the beauties of the Latin and the rudiments of the Greek tongue."

In his fifteenth year his physical infirmities suddenly disappeared, and he went to Oxford "with a stock of

erudition that might have puzzled a doctor, and a degree of ignorance of which a schoolboy would have been ashamed." His attainments in history were astonishing. He had read Herodotus, Xenophon, and Tacitus in translations; he had perused a long list of modern historians, whose names are now forgotten; he had swallowed with voracious appetite descriptions of India and China, of Mexico and Peru. It was at this period that he was introduced to the historic scenes that afterward engaged so many years of his life. He studied the lives of the successors of Constantine and the story of the barbarian invasions. He became interested in Mahomet and his Saracens. "Before I was sixteen," he says, "I had exhausted all that could be learned in English of the Arabs and Persians, the Tartars and Turks."

Gibbon's sojourn at the university was fruitless in learning. In a most scathing criticism he defiantly arraigns Oxford for its faulty organization and its incredibly careless administration. "To the University of Oxford," he says, "I acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life." He received scarcely any instruction; he was not even directed in his studies and reading; and, worst of all, no restraint whatever was placed on his tendencies to idleness and dissipation. As a gentleman-commoner, he was admitted to the Society of the Fellows of the University; but he found that "from the toil of reading or thinking or writing they had absolved their consciences; and the first

shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground, without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public."

But his idle life at the university was not sufficient to extinguish his literary bent. During a long vacation his taste for reading revived; and without original learning or skill in the art of composition, he resolved to write a book. His subject was "The Age of Sesostris"; and in the author's mature judgment it was most notable for its ambitious efforts in chronology. He speedily recognized its imperfections of style and treatment, and this humiliating discovery he notes as "the first symptom of taste."

His stay at Oxford was cut short by his conversion to the Church of Rome. From childhood he had been fond of religious disputation. His faith in Protestantism was first shaken by Middleton's "Free Inquiry," which approached the borders of infidelity. Bossuet's famous works, the "Exposition of the Catholic Doctrine" and the "History of Protestant Variations," achieved his conversion; and surely, he adds, "I fell by a noble hand." In 1753 he united with the Roman Catholic Church. His fervor for a moment raised him above worldly considerations; and in a letter, "written with all the pomp, the dignity, and self-satisfaction of a martyr," he announced his change of faith to his father.

After the first outbreak of indignation, his father lost no time in forming a new plan of education, and in devising a method by which his son might be cured of his "spiritual malady." Accordingly, young Gibbon was sent to Lausanne, where he was placed under the care of M. Pavilliard, a Calvinistic clergyman of rare tact and good sense. Here he passed the next five years of his life,

which proved the most important of all in his intellectual development. He studied the French language with such diligence that it became his spontaneous vehicle of thought and afterward imparted to his great work a Gallic tinge.

Under the wise direction of his instructor, who had won his confidence and respect, he entered upon a serious course of study, which included the Latin and Greek classics, history, logic, mathematics, philosophy, and jurisprudence. His ardor was extraordinary. "The desire of prolonging my time," he says, "gradually confirmed the salutary habit of early rising, to which I have always adhered." Among the books that contributed to form the historian of the Roman Empire, he particularly mentions Pascal's "Provincial Letters." His mathematical studies were carried as far as conic sections. Then he relinquished the study. "Nor can I lament," he adds, "that I desisted before my mind was hardened by the habit of rigid demonstration, so destructive of the finer feelings of moral evidence, which must, however, determine the actions and opinions of our lives."

Meanwhile the main purpose of his sojourn at Lausanne was not forgotten. The various points of Roman Catholic doctrine were, from time to time, brought under discussion; and naturally the superior skill of M. Pavilliard made itself felt. But Gibbon's mind was itself undergoing a change. "I am willing," he writes, "to allow him a handsome share of the honor of my conversion; yet I must observe that it was principally effected by my private reflections." Finally, "the various articles of the Romish creed disappeared like a dream;

and after a full conviction, on Christmas Day, 1754, I received the sacrament in the church of Lausanne. It was here that I suspended my religious inquiries, acquiescing with implicit belief in the tenets and mysteries which are adopted by the general consent of Catholics and Protestants."

While at Lausanne he made the acquaintance of Voltaire, whose writings appear to have exerted no small influence upon him. He listened with admiration while the great Frenchman declaimed his verses on the stage. He frequented the theatre which Voltaire had opened for the representation of his plays; and the pleasure derived from the French drama abated his idolatry, he tells us, "for the gigantic genius of Shakespeare, which is inculcated, from infancy, as the first duty of an Englishman."

It was at this time that Gibbon met Mademoiselle Curchod, whose beauty, gifts, and culture at once won his heart. The attachment appears to have been mutual; but, as events showed, he was far from being a heroic lover. For a time he indulged his dream of felicity; "but on my return to England," to borrow his own frank narrative, "I soon discovered that my father would not hear of this strange alliance, and that without his consent I was myself destitute and helpless. After a painful struggle I yielded to my fate: I sighed as a lover, I obeyed as a son; my wound was insensibly healed by time, absence, and the habits of a new life." And the young lady? She became the wife of Necker, the famous financier and minister of France, and the mother of the celebrated Madame de Staël. The tender memories of

this early attachment never entirely vanished; Gibbon and Madame Necker always remained friends. It is a tribute to his fidelity that, "while he sighed as a lover and obeyed as a son," he never afterward thought of marrying any other.

In 1758 he was called home. Though he looked forward with apprehension to meeting his father, he was kindly received as a man and friend. His relations with his stepmother, who was at first regarded with prejudice, at length became filial and tender. The next two years were pleasantly spent in London and at the country residence of his father in Hampshire. His social circle in the metropolis at this time remained limited; and frequently withdrawing from "crowds without company, and dissipation without pleasure," he stayed in his room with his books. "I had not been endowed," he acknowledges, "by art or nature with those happy gifts of confidence and address which unlock every door and every bosom."

At his father's country residence he yielded still more to his studious habits. The library was considered his especial domain. To overcome the influence of his French training, he read Addison and Swift. He admired the historical writings of Robertson, whose style he hoped some day to rival, and especially those of Hume, whose nameless graces filled him at once with delight and despair. It was at this time that he began the formation of his own extensive library; but he never bought a book for ostentation; "every volume before it was deposited on the shelf was either read or sufficiently examined." He made copious notes and abstracts of his extensive read-

ing. He took but little interest in the amusements of the country. He seldom mounted a horse, was indifferent to the sports of the chase, and even his philosophic walks were soon terminated by a shady bench, where he devoted himself to reading or meditation.

Gibbon's first publication dates from this period. His "Essai sur l'Étude de la Littérature" was published in London in 1761. It has been variously judged; but, owing to its foreign garb, it was more successful abroad than at home. "In England," he tells us, "it was received with cold indifference, little read, and speedily forgotten; a small impression was slowly dispersed; the bookseller murmured, and the author (had his feelings been more exquisite) might have wept over the blunders and baldness of the English translation." But after the publication of his history, fifteen years later, he had the satisfaction of seeing a copy of the original edition of the "Essai" bring the fanciful price of thirty shillings.

Shortly before the publication of the "Essai," in 1759, he entered the military service as a captain of militia and spent the next two years in camping, drilling, and marching in the southern counties of England. For a short time, in his enthusiasm, he thought of devoting himself to the profession of arms; but his "bloodless and inglorious campaigns" soon cured him of his military aspirations. The mode of life was uncongenial, and he lamented the time lost from his studies. Yet he recognized the benefits of his military experiences. It made him "an Englishman and a soldier"; and what he especially valued, "the discipline and evolution of a modern battalion gave him a clearer notion of the phalanx and legion; and the captain

of the Hampshire grenadiers (the reader may smile) has not been useless to the historian of the Roman Empire."

From youth, he informs us, he had aspired to the character of a historian. This deep-seated ambition was not forgotten during the uncongenial distractions of military life. He was in search of a theme; and in turn he thought of the expedition of Charles VIII. into Italy, the crusade of Richard I., the barons' war against King John, the life of Sir Philip Sidney, and then of Sir Walter Raleigh. On some of these subjects he did no small amount of reading; but none of them laid hold on him with irresistible attraction. It was not till his journey to Italy two years later that he found the subject that was long to engage the earnest labors of his maturest manhood. "It was at Rome," he says, "on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind."

After the disbanding of the militia, in 1763, Gibbon spent the next two or three years in travel, during which he visited Paris, Switzerland, and Italy. He was charmed with the French capital, where the fame of his "Essai" gained him admission to the most cultivated literary circles. His association with D'Alembert, Diderot, Barthélemy, Helvetius, Baron d'Holbach, and others of the same sceptical spirit, no doubt intensified his growing hostility to Christianity. He assiduously studied the treasures of art that had been accumulated in Paris; and without sacrificing the pleasures of society and of the drama, he diligently used his opportunities to promote his general culture.

He spent eleven months at Lausanne, where "the good Pavilliard shed tears of joy as he embraced a pupil whose literary merit he might fairly impute to his own labors." Here, in preparation for his Italian journey, he made a laborious review of Italian history and literature, filling a large commonplace book with notes and remarks. After visiting the leading Italian cities, he went to Rome. "My temper," he says, "is not very susceptible of enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm which I do not feel I scorn to affect. But, at the distance of twenty-five years, I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the *eternal city*."

He returned to England in 1765, and the next five years he designates as the least satisfactory of his life. He annually attended the meeting of the militia at Southampton, and rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel; but each year he was more and more disgusted with the inn, the wine, the company, and finally he resigned his empty commission. He lamented the absence of a vocation and his consequent idleness, while so many of his acquaintance were advancing with rapid steps in the various roads of honor and fortune. He began a history of Switzerland; but soon becoming discouraged, he threw his manuscript aside and gave up the attempt. In 1770 he successfully controverted a fanciful interpretation which Bishop Warburton, in his "Divine Legation," had placed upon the sixth book of the "Æneid." "But I cannot forgive myself," he said afterward, "the contemptuous treatment of a man who, with all his faults, was entitled to my esteem."

After the death of his father, in 1770, he came into

possession of a moderate estate, of which, on the whole, he made a judicious use. He established himself in London and divided his time between study and society. His circle of acquaintance was extended till it embraced nearly all the eminent men of his day. He joined the Literary Club, of which Johnson, Burke, Garrick, Reynolds, Goldsmith, and others were distinguished members. He now undertook the composition of the first volume of his History, for which he had prepared himself by careful and elaborate research. "At the outset," he says, "all was dark and doubtful — even the title of the work, the true era of the decline and fall of the empire, the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative — and I was often tempted to cast away the labor of seven years. The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation; three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect." The first volume appeared in 1776 and was received with great applause. Its excellence of matter and style was almost universally recognized, and the author suddenly found himself famous.

Two years before, while engaged on his History, he had been elected to a seat in Parliament, of which he remained a member for nearly a decade. There is nothing in his parliamentary career to add to his fame. His timidity, as well as the weakness of his voice, prevented him from becoming an orator. "After a fleeting illusive

hope," he says, "prudence condemned me to acquiesce in the humble station of a mute." In the conflict between Great Britain and America, he "supported, with many a sincere and silent vote, the rights, though not perhaps the interests, of the mother country." While his career in Parliament was inglorious, it was not valueless to him. It became "a school of civil prudence, the first and most essential virtue of a historian."

In 1781 he published two more volumes of his History, which, owing to the opposition aroused by his hostile attitude to Christianity, were somewhat coldly received. He long hesitated whether he should push his History beyond the fall of the Western Empire. During this period of indecision, he turned to Greek literature, and read, not only the leading historians, but also the poets and dramatists. But after a few months he began to long "for the daily task, the active pursuit, which gave a value to every book and an object to every inquiry;" and once more he turned to his vast undertaking.

Finding that his income was insufficient for the style of living he had been indulging in London, he resolved to retire to Lausanne. He took up his residence there in 1783, in the midst of delightful and congenial society. After a delay of nearly a year, occasioned by the incidents of his removal, he settled down to daily toil and rapidly pushed his book to completion. "I have presumed," he says, "to mark the moment of conception; I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in

my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom and perhaps the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of the historian must be short and precarious."

After an absence of four years, he returned to England with the manuscript of the last three volumes, which were rapidly carried through the press. The day of publication was delayed for a short time, that it might fall on the fifty-first anniversary of his birth. The double festival was celebrated by a literary dinner at the publisher's house, where the historian "seemed to blush" at some fulsome verses in his praise. The concluding volumes were widely read, but did not escape considerable adverse criticism. The entire work was translated into French, German, and Italian, and on the Continent generally received the recognition to which its merits entitle it.

Gibbon returned to Lausanne in 1788, where the next five years were spent in the miscellaneous delights of his large library. It was during this period that he wrote the brief but admirable "Autobiography," afterward given to the world by his friend, Lord Sheffield. The storm of the French Revolution had now burst on Europe. In

his sympathies, Gibbon was an aristocrat, and the "Gallic frenzy, the wild theories of equal and boundless freedom," filled him with terror. The democratic leaven found its way to Switzerland. In the prospect of possible trouble, he did not exhibit a heroic spirit. "For myself," he wrote, "(may the omen be averted!) I can only declare that the first stroke of a rebel drum would be the signal of my immediate departure."

He returned to England in 1793. He estimated that "the laws of probability, so true in general, so fallacious in particular," still allowed him about fifteen years of life. He looked forward to this closing period — "the mature season in which our passions are supposed to be calmed, our duties fulfilled, our ambition satisfied" — with a melancholy pleasure. But he was to be disappointed; the laws of probability proved fallacious for him. He died of a dropsical affection Jan. 16, 1794, nine months after his return to London.

He esteemed his lot in life a happy one. "When I contemplate the common lot of mortality," he writes, "I must acknowledge that I have drawn a high prize in the lottery of life. The far greater part of the globe is overspread with barbarism or slavery; in the civilized world the most numerous class is condemned to ignorance and poverty; and the double fortune of my birth in a free and enlightened country, in an honorable and wealthy family, is the lucky chance of an unit against millions." Few men have been more favored in outward circumstances, and with a genuine Epicurean spirit he knew how to appreciate and enjoy them.

The essential features of his character have come out in

the course of this sketch. He was lacking in warmth, enthusiasm, heroic virtue; and throughout his whole life we fail to discover a single act of magnanimity. Though he formed a few lasting friendships, he was not one to draw about him a large circle of enthusiastic admirers. For the rest, we may accept his own estimate of his character: "I am endowed with a cheerful temper, a moderate sensibility, and a natural disposition to repose rather than to activity; some mischievous appetites and habits have perhaps been corrected by philosophy or time. The love of study, a passion which derives fresh vigor from enjoyment, supplies each day, each hour, with a perpetual source of independent and rational pleasure."

Gibbon's fame rests almost exclusively on his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire," to which he devoted twenty laborious years. He was admirably equipped by nature and culture for this vast undertaking. He had a natural bent for historic investigation. Along with a wide sweep of intellect, he had a genius for minute investigation. He had a strong artistic sense, which enabled him to marshal in due order and proportion the vast multitude of details. His methodical habits of study made him master of all available sources of information. Except when Christianity comes under review, he is exceedingly judicious in weighing evidence and forming conclusions. In treating of Christianity, the hostility imbibed from the school of Voltaire instantly betrays him into fallacy or unfairness. In spite of their brilliant and subtle irony, the famous fifteenth and sixteenth chapters, in which the rapid spread of Christianity is accounted for, must remain a blemish, not only on the great work itself, but on the character of the historian.

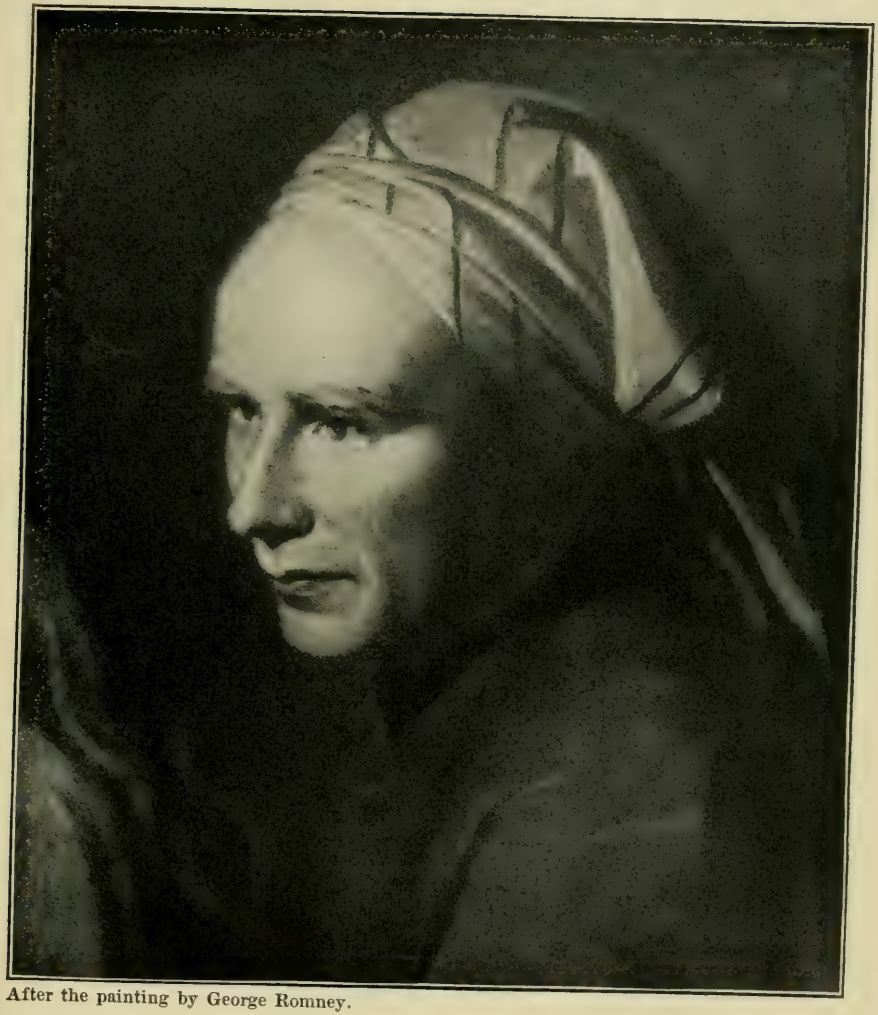
The style of "The Decline and Fall" is remarkable for its stately dignity. It has been characterized as "copious, splendid, elegantly rounded, distinguished by supreme artificial skill." It is enriched by suggestive epithets. With a less magnificent subject, the style must have been condemned as false or even ridiculous. But no grander theme ever engaged historian's pen. Mighty movements appear in succession upon the broad historic canvas — the triumph of Christianity, the invasions of the barbarians, the development of the papal power, the rise of Mohammedanism, the religious enthusiasm of the crusades, the fall of Constantinople and the extinction of the empire of the East. It was but natural that the historian's soul should be elevated by the contemplation of so grand a theme, and that his style should rise into a corresponding dignity and splendor.

WILLIAM COWPER.

THERE are two reasons why the poetry of Cowper, apart from its intrinsic excellence, deserves special attention. The first is, that it marks the transition from the artificial to the natural school. While Cowper's first volume clearly shows the influence of Pope, his subsequent and more important works are decidedly modern in form and spirit. Breaking away from the restraint of artificial rules, the poet comes at last to treat of man and nature with simplicity and freedom. He exhibits great breadth of sympathy. Nature is studied for its own sake and described with fond picturesqueness of detail. The various interests and conditions of human life — wealth and poverty, freedom and slavery, city and country, knowledge and ignorance — are all brought before us in an unconventional way.

The second distinctive feature of Cowper's poetry is its religious element. He was the poet of the evangelical revival in England. Other great poets have treated moral and religious themes; but Cowper is the first to manifest a deeply pious spirit. No doubt the religious element is sometimes carried to excess; but it must be said that the moral condition of England at this time required vigorous preaching.

The life of Cowper is a strangely sad one. His morbidly sensitive nature unfitted him for contact with the ruthless world. "Certainly I am not an absolute fool,"



After the painting by George Romney.



he wrote in one of his letters, "but I have more weaknesses than the greatest of all the fools I can recollect at present. In short, if I was as fit for the next world as I am unfit for this, — and God forbid I should speak it in vanity, — I would not change conditions with any saint in Christendom." His religious life was frequently clouded by doubt and despair. Worst of all, his mind on several occasions gave way. But in spite of misfortune and suffering, he became the best letter writer of England, and wrote at least one work that will perish only with the English language itself.

William Cowper was born Nov. 26, 1731, in Hertfordshire. His parentage on both sides was of ancient lineage; but for this he seems to have cared but little: —

> "My boast is not that I deduce my birth
> From loins enthroned, and rulers of the earth;
> But higher far my proud pretensions rise, —
> The son of parents passed into the skies."

His father was chaplain to George II. His mother, a woman of excellent mind and heart, died when he was six years old. All through his life of sadness, he cherished an affectionate remembrance of her tenderness; and fifty years after her death, on receiving her picture from a relative, he wrote a poem that has become famous for its pathetic beauty: —

> "The record fair
> That memory keeps of all thy kindness there,
> Still outlives many a storm, that has effaced
> A thousand other themes less deeply traced."

At the age of six years this timid and sensitive child was placed in a large boarding-school, where he was tyran-

nized over by the larger boys. One in particular selected him as the special object of his cruelty. "His savage treatment of me," Cowper wrote years afterward, "impressed such a dread of his figure upon my mind that I well remember being afraid to lift my eyes upon him higher than to his knees, and that I knew him better by his shoe-buckles than by any other part of his dress." The recollection of the cruelties he suffered inspired his poem "Tirocinium, or a Review of Schools," in which he points out the evils of those institutions and makes a strong plea for home instruction.

At the age of ten he entered Westminster School. He made excellent attainments in Latin and Greek, the principal subjects of study at that time. In spite of frequent fits of despondency, he excelled in cricket and foot-ball. Among his school-fellows afterward to become famous was Warren Hastings, in whose guilt he steadily refused in after years to believe. His poetical turn manifested itself in his school days, and "Verses," written on finding the heel of a shoe, showed his moralizing disposition, and contained a promise of "The Task":—

> "This pond'rous heel of perforated hide
> Compact, with pegs indented, many a row,
> Haply, — for such its massy form bespeaks, —
> The weighty tread of some rude peasant clown,
> Upbore: on this supported, oft he stretched
> With uncouth strides along the furrowed glebe,
> Flattening the stubborn clod, till cruel time
> (What will not cruel time?) or a wry step,
> Severed the strict cohesion."

At eighteen, conforming to the wish of his father, Cowper began the study of law with an attorney in London.

Both in taste and talent he was unfitted for the legal profession. He read more in literature than in law. In the same office was another young man named Thurlow, who afterward became lord chancellor. Cowper foresaw the success of his companion, and one evening, in the presence of some ladies, he playfully said: "Thurlow, I am nobody, and shall always be nobody, and you will be chancellor. You shall provide for me when you are." Thurlow replied, with a smile, "I surely will." "These ladies," continued Cowper, "are our witnesses." "Let them be so," answered the future chancellor, "for I will certainly do it." Cowper's foresight for his friend was better than for himself; he certainly became somebody. As to the aid so generously promised, it never extended beyond some advice in the translation of Homer.

In 1752 Cowper took up his residence in the Middle Temple, but never gave himself seriously to law. He read Greek and translated French. He became a member of a literary circle, called the Nonsense Club, and occasionally wrote a bit of verse or prose. He contributed to the *Connoisseur* a few papers in the style of Addison. But he suffered from morbid depression. The shadow of the dreadful affliction that darkened his later years stole upon him. "Day and night," he wrote in his painful memoir, "I was upon the rack, lying down in horror and rising up in despair." He was admitted to the bar in 1754, but beyond the duties of a commissioner of bankrupts, he never followed his profession.

While a student of law he was a frequent visitor at the house of his uncle, Ashley Cowper. He fell in love with his cousin Theodora, and, as might be expected, addressed

to her a considerable number of poems. They are generally of a tame, mediocre quality; but in the lines "Upon a Venerable Rival" there is a touch of jealous, spiteful vigor: —

> "For once attempt not to despise
> What I esteem a rule:
> Who early loves, though young, is wise, —
> Who old, though gray, a fool."

His devotion met with an ardent return, but encountered parental opposition. Cowper's poverty, as well as his kinship and despondency, was regarded by Theodora's father as a barrier to their union. "What will you do if you marry your cousin?" inquired the prudent father. "Do, sir?" replied the heroic girl, "wash all day and ride out on the great dog at night." But when, in spite of prayers and tears, her father remained inexorable, she resolved to obey him. She gave up her lover, whom she never saw afterward. But with beautiful constancy she remained true to him at heart, watched over his life with tender solicitude, and in various emergencies helped him with anonymous gifts. She fondly treasured the poems addressed to her, and they were published only after her death in 1824.

At the age of thirty-one Cowper found his resources pretty well exhausted and was anxious to secure employment. An influential relative nominated him for the office of clerk of journals in the House of Lords. To establish his fitness it became necessary for him to stand an examination at the bar of the House. For some months he tried to make preparation; but his timid, sensitive nature recoiled more and more from the ordeal. "They whose

spirits are formed like mine," he wrote, "to whom a public exhibition of themselves is mental poison, may have some idea of the horrors of my situation — others can have none." Finally, losing his mental balance entirely, he attempted suicide and was saved from death only by the breaking of the garter, with which he had hanged himself. His nomination was of course withdrawn, and he was placed in a private asylum. After eighteen months, in which he went through a deep but morbid religious experience, he regained his health.

With the year 1765 begins a new era in Cowper's life. In order to be near his brother, a fellow of St. Benet's College, Cambridge, he removed to Huntingdon. The town and surrounding country were very agreeable to him. For his support a few relatives raised a fund, which he received with humble gratitude. Here he began the extensive correspondence, which, apart from his poetry, would have given him an honored place in English literature. Ease, grace, humor, are inimitably blended in his letters. He sympathized with the religious movement led by Wesley and Whitefield. He adopted what is now generally considered a rigorous type of piety, the earnest spirit of which subsequently entered into his poetry. Attracted by religious sympathy and social culture, he became a boarder in the Unwin family, with which the rest of his life was to be intimately associated. Mrs. Unwin proved especially congenial, of whom he wrote to his cousin, "That woman is a blessing to me, and I never see her without being the better for her company."

To most persons the family life of the Unwins will not appear attractive or cheerful. "We breakfast commonly

between eight and nine," wrote Cowper with his usual fondness for details; "till eleven, we read either the Scripture or the sermons of some faithful preacher of those holy mysteries; at eleven we attend divine service, which is performed here twice every day; and from twelve to three we separate and amuse ourselves as we please. During the interval I either read in my own apartment, or walk, or ride, or work in the garden. We seldom sit an hour after dinner, but, if the weather permits, adjourn to the garden, where, with Mrs. Unwin and her son, I have generally the pleasure of religious conversation till tea-time. . . . At night we read and converse as before, till supper, and commonly finish the evening either with hymns or a sermon, and, last of all, the family are called to prayers."

This quiet life was not to continue undisturbed. At the end of two years Mr. Unwin was thrown from his horse and killed. Cowper continued an inmate of the Unwin home. The friendship existing between him and Mrs. Unwin gradually ripened into an attachment, which was to end only with life itself. At one time they contemplated marriage; but this was prevented by a return of Cowper's malady. In 1767, on the invitation of the Rev. John Newton, they moved to Olney in Buckinghamshire. The village, situated on the Ouse, was low, damp, and unhealthy; but the partial eye of the poet, as we shall see later, discovered beauty in the landscape.

The people were poor, illiterate lace-makers. Cowper cordially assisted in the religious work of the devoted pastor: he visited the poor, distributed alms, and led in prayer-meetings. For a hymn-book which Newton was

preparing, he composed the celebrated Olney hymns, sixty-eight in number. Like most hymns, they are generally deficient in high poetic quality; but several of them —

"Oh! for a closer walk with God,"
"There is a fountain filled with blood,"
"What various hindrances we meet,"
"God moves in a mysterious way" —

are found in all standard collections.

Cowper's mode of life at Olney did not prove favorable to his health, and in 1773 his insanity returned. It took the form of religious despair. Through a long illness he was attended by Mrs. Unwin with affectionate, self-sacrificing care. Newton likewise was very patient and kind. As Cowper began to pass out of the shadow, he gave himself to light employment in carpentry and gardening. He surrounded himself with rabbits, cats, and other pets, on which he lavished kindly care. In "The Task" he commemorates a favorite pet: —

"One sheltered hare
Has never heard the sanguinary yell
Of cruel man, exulting in her woes.
Innocent partner of my peaceful home,
Whom ten long years' experience of my care
Has made at last familiar, she has lost
Much of her vigilant instinctive dread,
Not needful here, beneath a roof like mine."

With returning health, his strong sense of humor revived. It found expression in the poem "Report of an Adjudged Case," which is intended as a gentle satire on that class of legal judgments which, by adhering to the

letter of the law, perverts justice. Every one knows the poem: —

> "Between Nose and Eyes a strange contest arose,
> The spectacles set them unhappily wrong;
> The point in dispute was, as all the world knows,
> To which the said spectacles ought to belong."

Cowper was not a man of initiative energy. Left to himself, his life would have passed in meditative repose. All his longer poems were suggested to him by friends. In 1779 he was introduced to the Rev. William Bull, a dissenting minister living some five miles from Olney, whom he learned to esteem both for his learning and his piety. It was through him that he was induced to translate the quietistic poems of Madame Guyon. Though deeply spiritual in tone, these poems inculcate a morbid type of piety. Cowper was not unconscious of their faults, and in his translation he corrected their irreverent familiarity toward God.

The year 1781 marks the beginning of Cowper's literary fame. He was now fifty years old; and apart from the natural effects of age, his painful experience tended to enrich his thought and subdue his style. His taste had been formed not only on the Latin and Greek classics, but also on the best English poets, of whom he expresses many able judgments in his letters. He greatly admired Milton; and after reading Dr. Johnson's unfair sketch in the "Lives of the Poets," he indignantly exclaimed: "Oh, I could thrash his old jacket till I made his pension jingle in his pocket!"

He felt the need of congenial employment; and at the suggestion of Mrs. Unwin, who proposed the subject,

"The Progress of Error," he began his moral satires. He worked with enthusiasm, and in the course of a few months finished "The Progress of Error," "Truth," "Table Talk," "Expostulation," "Hope," "Charity," "Conversation," and "Retirement." The volume appeared in 1782. Its reception by the public was hardly equal to its merits. The poet received unfavorable criticism with admirable composure and humor. "We may now treat the critics," he wrote, "as the archbishop of Toledo treated Gil Blas, when he found fault with one of his sermons. His grace gave him a kick and said, 'Begone for a jackanapes and furnish yourself with a better taste, if you know where to find it.'"

The moral satires cover a wide range of subject and well portray the manners of the time. Occasionally they are enlivened by characteristic humor. "I am merry," the poet said, "that I may decoy people into my company; and grave, that they may be better for it." The following lines give us the ideal to which he endeavored to conform his verse: —

> "Give me the line that flows its stately course
> Like a proud swan, conquering the stream by force;
> That like some cottage beauty, strikes the heart,
> Quite unindebted to the tricks of art."

In what is said of the poet we discern the freedom of a new era: —

> "A poet does not work by square or line,
> As smiths and joiners perfect a design;
> At least we moderns, our attention less,
> Beyond the example of our sires digress,
> And claim a right to scamper and run wide,
> Wherever chance, caprice, or fancy guide."

The following directions for story-telling are as applicable to written as to oral discourse : —

> "A tale should be judicious, clear, succinct;
> The language plain, and incidents well linked.
> Tell not as new what everybody knows,
> And, new or old, still hasten to a close;
> There centring in a focus, round and neat,
> Let all your rays of information meet."

At this period Cowper was blessed with another friendship that told favorably on himself and English literature. Lady Austen, the widow of a baronet, was a witty, vivacious, sensible woman, who after an accidental acquaintance became deeply interested in the poet. Though she had been accustomed to the best drawing-rooms of London and Paris, she took up her residence in the quiet village of Olney and lived in close intimacy with the Unwin household. To her we are indebted for two of Cowper's best-known poems. Observing his depression one day, she related to him the story of the luckless John Gilpin. It had the desired effect. That night he lay awake laughing over the story and next morning turned it into the famous ballad of "John Gilpin." It was published anonymously in a newspaper, recited by an actor, and taken up by the public; and since that time it has retained its place in popular favor as one of the most humorous ballads in our language.

Lady Austen was fond of blank verse, and urged Cowper to write a poem of that kind. When he asked for a subject, she assigned him "The Sofa." The poet set to work, and in rapid succession completed "The Sofa,"

"The Timepiece," "The Garden," "The Winter Evening," "The Winter Morning Walk," and "The Winter Walk at Noon," which taken together constitute "The Task," his greatest work. In this poem Cowper's genius finds its fullest expression. It was published in 1785 and at once obtained flattering recognition. Poetry at this time was at a low ebb in England. "The Task" easily gave Cowper a foremost place among the poets of his time. In style and theme it exhibits a complete rupture with the artificial school of the Augustan Age. It reveals a sympathy with the ordinary scenes and incidents of life, and its descriptions are based on close observation. As in the satires, there is a prevailing moral tone. Its general tendency, to use the poet's own words, is "to discountenance the modern enthusiasm after a London life and to recommend rural ease as friendly to the cause of piety and virtue."

Here is his description of the Olney neighborhood, as he viewed it from an eminence in company with Mrs. Unwin: —

> "Thence with what pleasure have we just discerned
> The distant plough slow moving, and beside
> His laboring team that swerved not from the track,
> The sturdy swain diminished to a boy!
> Here Ouse, slow winding through a level plain
> Of spacious meads, with cattle sprinkled o'er,
> Conducts the eye along his sinuous course
> Delighted. There, fast rooted in their bank,
> Stand, never overlooked, our favorite elms,
> That screen the herdsman's solitary hut;
> While far beyond, and overthwart the stream,
> That, as with molten glass, inlays the vale,

The sloping land recedes into the clouds;
Displaying on its varied side the grace
Of hedge-row beauties numberless, square tower,
Tall spire, from which the sound of cheerful bells
Just undulates upon the listening ear,
Groves, heaths, and smoking villages, remote."

The poet had not only an eye for rural sights, but also an ear for rural sounds. Note the following fine passage: —

"Mighty winds
That sweep the skirt of some far-spreading wood
Of ancient growth, make music not unlike
The dash of Ocean on his winding shore,
And lull the spirit while they fill the mind;
Unnumbered branches waving in the blast,
And all their leaves fast fluttering, all at once.
Nor less composure waits upon the roar
Of distant floods, or on the softer voice
Of neighboring fountain, or of rills that slip
Through the cleft rock, and chiming as they fall
Upon loose pebbles, lose themselves at length
In matted grass that with a livelier green
Betrays the secret of their silent course."

As illustrating Cowper's attentive observation and graphic description, the following extract from the "Winter Morning Walk" will be of interest: —

"Forth goes the woodman, leaving unconcerned
The cheerful haunts of man, to wield the axe
And drive the wedge in yonder forest drear,
From morn to eve his solitary task.
Shaggy, and lean, and shrewd, with pointed ears
And tail cropped short, half lurcher and half cur,
His dog attends him. Close behind his heel

Now creeps he slow; and now, with many a frisk
Wide-scampering, snatches up the drifted snow
With ivory teeth, or ploughs it with his snout;
Then shakes his powdered coat, and barks for joy.
Heedless of all his pranks, the sturdy churl
Moves right toward the mark; nor stops for aught,
But now and then with pressure of his thumb
To adjust the fragrant charge of a short tube,
That fumes beneath his nose: the trailing cloud
Streams far behind him, scenting all the air."

One more extract from this admirable poem must suffice. It reveals the poet's broad and kindly sympathies: —

"I would not enter on my list of friends
(Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility) the man
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

Before "The Task" was finished, the friendly relations existing between the poet and Lady Austen were severed. The cause of the rupture has not been made clear. It has been suggested that the mutual jealousy of the two ladies had something to do with it. However that may be, Lady Austen dropped out of the poet's life —

"Like the lost Pleiad, seen no more below."

But her place was soon supplied by Lady Hesketh, a cousin of the poet's, who had been drawn to him by his growing fame. Scarcely inferior to Lady Austen in accomplishments, she proved a more lasting friend. In 1786 she provided for Cowper a better home at Weston, an elevated spot a short distance from Olney.

At various times the poet amused himself with brief

versions from the ancient classics. His renderings of Ovid, Virgil, and particularly Horace are characterized by grace and fidelity. But his most important work was a translation of Homer's "Iliad" and "Odyssey," on which he worked diligently for five years. He found fault with Pope for departing so widely from the simplicity and naturalness of the original. His own version in large measure avoids these mistakes, but somehow, when it appeared in 1791, it failed to give satisfaction. Perhaps the failure lay in the nature of the task itself, for no translation can ever fully reproduce the simplicity, melody, and graphic power of the original. Though Cowper was most unworldly in money matters, he no doubt found some compensation for his failure in the thousand pounds paid him by his publisher.

Among his shorter poems, besides those previously noticed, there are several that deserve special attention. The poem on "Friendship" is a veritable storehouse of wisdom and wit: —

"Who seeks a friend should come disposed
To exhibit in full bloom disclosed
The graces and the beauties
That form the character he seeks;
For 'tis a union that bespeaks
Reciprocated duties.

"The man that hails you Tom or Jack,
And proves by thumps upon your back
How he esteems your merit,
Is such a friend, that one had need
Be very much his friend indeed
To pardon or to bear it."

His "Verses" supposed to be written by Alexander Selkirk is a poem known to every one. "Mutual Forbearance" contains four often-quoted lines: —

> "The kindest and the happiest pair
> Will find occasion to forbear,
> And something every day they live
> To pity and perhaps forgive."

"The Needless Alarm" beautifully teaches the moral: —

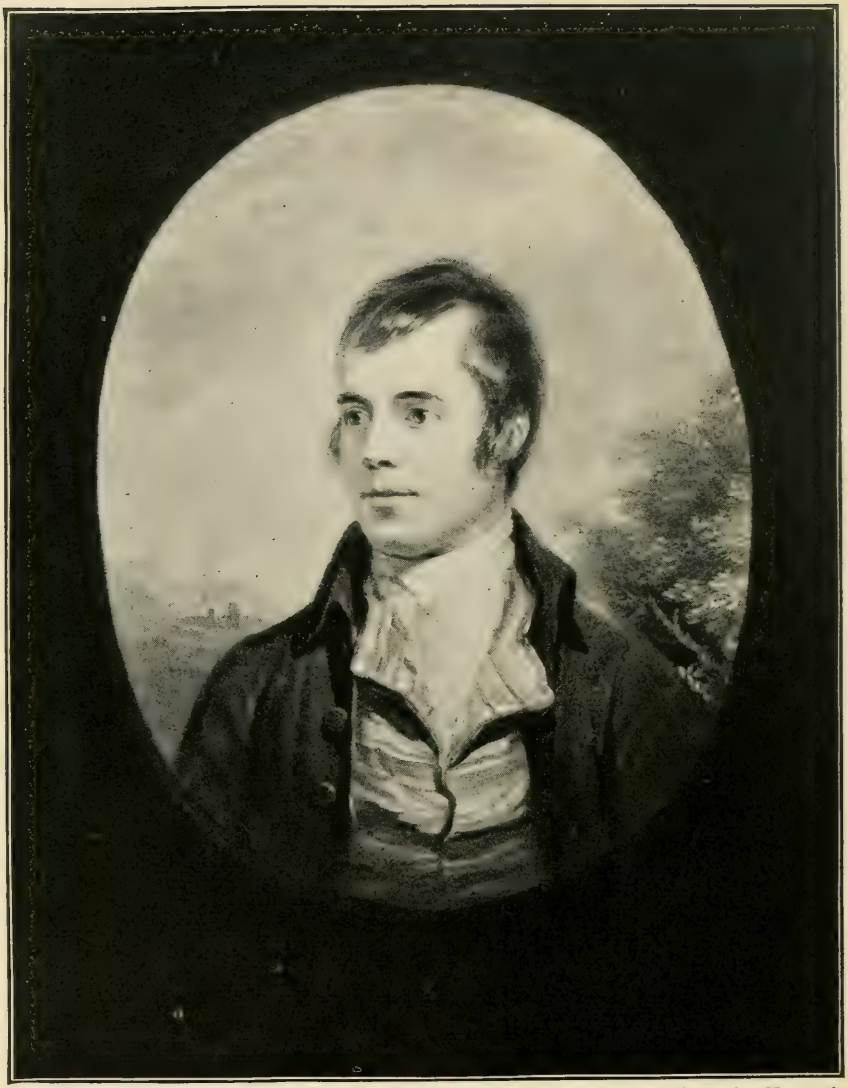
> "Beware of desperate steps. The darkest day
> Live till to-morrow shall have passed away."

"The Poplar Field," "The Shrubbery," and "To Mary" are excellent, while "The Castaway" is remarkable both for its vigor and for the fact that it was Cowper's last original poem.

The evening of his life was deeply overcast. Mrs. Unwin, so long his support, was stricken with paralysis. By his tender and unfailing attention he nobly repaid his great debt to her. But the strain proved too much for his strength, and his melancholy returned. In 1794 the king granted him a pension of three hundred pounds, but he was not in a condition to understand his good fortune. Loyal friends gathered about him in his helplessness. A change of scene was tried, but in vain. In 1796 Mrs. Unwin passed away. When taken to see her lifeless body, he uttered one passionate cry of pain and never spoke of her more. He survived her nearly four years, with now and then a brief return of his literary power. He died peacefully April 25, 1800.

The key-note of his character was sincerity. He did

not assume to be more than he actually was. His sincerity explains not only the singular charm of his society, but also the prevailing character of his poetry. Refusing to stoop to artificialities, he wrote what he truly observed, felt, and thought. "My descriptions," he said, "are all from nature; not one of them second-hand. My delineations of the heart are from my own experience; not one of them borrowed from books or in the least degree conjectural."



Engraved by William Walker and Samuel Cousins, from the painting by Alexander Nasmyth done in 1787.

Robert Burns

ROBERT BURNS.

THE greatest poet of Scotland and the best song writer of the world — such is but a moderate estimate of Burns. Scarcely any one will be found to claim less, and some to claim more. A careful study of his writings, in connection with the unfavorable circumstances of his life, impresses us with his extraordinary genius. He was the greatest poetic genius produced by Great Britain in the eighteenth century. A peculiar interest attaches to him. His great natural gifts were hampered by poverty and manual toil, and enslaved by evil habits, so that he accomplished only a small part of what was possible for him. That his genius was chained by untoward circumstances awakens our profound pity and regret; and that he weakly yielded to intemperance and immorality arouses our censure and indignation.

His life was a tragedy — a proud and powerful mind overcome at length in the hard struggle of life. The catastrophe was unspeakably sad; yet — let not our admiration of his gifts blind our judgment — Burns himself, and not an unkind destiny, was chiefly to blame. Genius has no exemption from the ordinary rules of morality. If he had abstained from drunken carousals and illicit amours, his life might have been crowned with beauty and honor. No doubt, as is often charitably said, he had strong passions and severe temptations; but these he ought to have resisted; for, as Carlyle says, "Nature

fashions no creature without implanting in it the strength needful for its action and duration; least of all does she so neglect her masterpiece and darling, the poetic soul."

Robert Burns was born in a clay-built cottage two miles from the town of Ayr in 1759. His father was a man of strict integrity and deep piety. We have an imperishable portrait of him in "The Cotter's Saturday Night." His early years were spent on a small unfruitful farm in poverty and toil. His strength was overtaxed, his shoulders became stooped, and his nervous system was weakened. He afterward spoke of this period as combining "the cheerless gloom of a hermit with the unceasing moil of a galley slave."

Yet this hardship was not without some relief. His humble home was sweetened with kindness and love; and the future poet was taught, first in school and afterward by his father, the elements of learning. His mind was enlarged, and his taste refined by works of the highest merit. His early reading included the *Spectator*, Shakespeare, Pope, and Locke's "Human Understanding."

In his fifteenth year his genius was awakened under the sweet spell of love. "You know," he says, "our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labors of harvest. In my fifteenth summer my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language; but you know the Scottish idiom. She was a bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass. In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me into that delicious passion which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and bookworm

philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys here below." The first offspring of his muse was entitled "Handsome Nell," which, though he afterward spoke of it as puerile, still contains a touch of that charming simplicity of thought and expression which characterizes so much of his poetry. Is not this stanza delightful? —

"She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Baith decent and genteel,
And then there's something in her gait
Gars[1] ony dress look weel."

At the age of nineteen he went to Kirkoswald to study mensuration and surveying. It turned out to be a bad move. The town was frequented by smugglers and adventurers; and Burns was introduced into scenes of what he calls "swaggering riot and roaring dissipation." He worked at his mensuration with sufficient diligence till he one day met a pretty lass and fell in love. The current of his thought was turned from mathematics to poetry, and this change put an end to his studies. Love-making now became a common business with him. He composed a song on every pretty girl he knew. The most beautiful of the songs of this period is his "Mary Morison," which was inspired by a real affection: —

"Yestreen, when to the trembling string,
The dance gaed thro' the lighted ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing,
I sat, but neither heard nor saw:
Tho' this was fair, and that was braw,
And yon the toast of a' the town,
I sigh'd and said amang them a',
Ye are na Mary Morison.

[1] Makes.

"Oh, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly die;
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thought ungentle canna be
The thought o' Mary Morison."

In spite of his sweet love songs his suit was rejected — an incident that long cast a shadow over his inner life. He was a great reader. He possessed a "Collection of English Songs"; and this, he says, "was my vade-mecum. I pored over them driving my cart, or walking to labor, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noticing the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation or fustian; and I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic craft, such as it is." A consciousness of his strength began to dawn upon him and to fill his mind with a great ambition. Amidst his varied labors on the farm, as a beardless boy, he felt —

"E'en then a wish, I mind its power,
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast:
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang at least."

In the summer of 1781 he went to Irvine to learn the flax-dressing business in the hope of increasing thereby the profits of farming. It turned out to be a disastrous undertaking. As at Kirkoswald, he fell into the company of smugglers and adventurers, by whom he was encouraged in loose opinions and bad habits. With the unset-

tling of his religious convictions, he overleaped the restraints that had hitherto kept him in the path of virtue.

His flax-dressing came to an abrupt close. He was robbed by his partner, and his shop took fire at a New Year's carousal and was burnt to the ground. Dispirited and tormented with an evil conscience, he returned to his home, which was soon to be overshadowed by the death of his father. "Whoever lives to see it," the old man had said, "something extraordinary will come from that boy." But he went to the grave sorely troubled with apprehensions about the future of his gifted son.

Burns now made an effort to reform. In his own words, "I read farming books, I calculated crops, I attended markets, and, in short, in spite of the devil, the world, and the flesh, I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom; and I returned like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." He came under ecclesiastical discipline for immorality and revenged himself by lashing the minister and church officers with keen and merciless satire. His series of religious satires, in spite of all their inimitable brilliancy of wit, reflect little credit either on his judgment or his character. While his harvests were failing, and his business interests were all going against him, he found solace in rhyme. As he says: —

"Leeze me[1] on rhyme! it's aye a treasure,
My chief, amaist my only pleasure,
At hame, a-fiel', at wark, at leisure,

[1] I am happy in rhyme.

The Muse, poor hizzie!
Tho' rough and raplock[1] be her measure,
She's seldom lazy."

The year 1785, while he was laboring with his brother on a farm at Mossgiel, saw the greatest activity of his muse. It was at that time that he composed "To a Mouse," "The Cotter's Saturday Night," "Address to the Deil," "Man Was Made to Mourn," and "The Mountain Daisy," which established his fame on a lasting foundation. They were composed behind the plough and afterward written in a little farmhouse garret. "Thither," says Chambers, "when he had returned from his day's work, the poet used to retire and seat himself at a small deal table, lighted by a narrow skylight in the roof, to transcribe the verses which he had composed in the fields. His favorite time for composition was at the plough."

His immoral conduct again brought him into serious trouble. The indignant father of Jean Armour put the officers of the law upon his track. By a subsequent marriage with Jean, he did something in the way of repairing the wrong. While lurking in concealment, he resolved to emigrate to Jamaica; and to secure the necessary means for the voyage, he published a volume of his poems in 1786.

The result altered all his plans. The volume took Scotland by storm. "Old and young," says a contemporary, "high and low, grave and gay, learned and ignorant, were alike delighted, agitated, transported. I was at that time resident in Galloway, contiguous to Ayrshire, and I can well remember how even plough-boys and maid-servants would have gladly bestowed the wages they earned most

[1] Coarse.

hardly, and which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might procure the works of Burns."

As a financial venture, the volume brought him only twenty pounds; but what was of more importance, it retained him in his native country and introduced him to the noble and the learned of Edinburgh. He has left a humorous account of the first time he met a nobleman socially, and "dinner'd wi' a Lord": —

> "But wi' a Lord! stand out my shin,
> A Lord — a Peer, an Earl's son!
> Up higher yet my bonnet!
> And sic a Lord! lang Scotch ells twa,
> Our Peerage he o'erlooks them a',
> As I look o'er a sonnet."

Professor Dugald Stewart has given an interesting account of Burns's bearing on the same occasion: "His manners were then, as they continued ever afterward, simple, manly, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth, but without anything that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him; and listened with apparent attention and deference on subjects where his want of education deprived him of the means of information."

In November, 1786, Burns deemed it wise to visit the Scottish metropolis. His journey thither on horseback was a continued ovation. He occupied very humble quarters, lodging in a small room costing three shillings a week. From this lowly abode he went forth into the best society of Edinburgh, to which his genius gained him ready admission. He was the social lion of the day.

The Scottish capital was noted at this time for the literary talent gathered there. In the most polished drawing-rooms of the city Burns met Dugald Stewart, William Robertson, Adam Smith, Hugh Blair, and others of scarcely less celebrity. He did not suffer from this contact with the ablest men of his country. Indeed, it has been said by one who knew him well that poetry was not his forte. His brilliant conversation — his vigorous thought, sparkling wit, and trenchant style — sometimes eclipsed his poetry.

His manner was open and manly, a consciousness of native strength preserving him from all servility. He showed, as Lockhart says, "in the strain of his bearing his belief that in the society of the most eminent men of his nation he was where he was entitled to be, hardly deigning to flatter them by exhibiting a symptom of being flattered." He was especially pleasing to ladies, "fairly carrying them off their feet," as one of them said, "by his deference of manner and the mingled humor and pathos of his talk."

He cherished a proud feeling of independence. He emphasized individual worth and looked with contempt on what may be regarded as the mere accidents of birth or fortune. To this feeling, which finds a response in every noble breast, he gave expression in his song, "A Man's a Man for a' That," which mightily voiced the democratic spirit of the age: —

"Is there, for honest poverty,
That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by;
We dare be puir for a' that.

"For a' that, and a' that,
Our toils obscure and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea-stamp —
The man's the gowd[1] for a' that."

He chafed under the inequalities of fortune he discovered in society and sometimes showed an inconsiderate bitterness of feeling. "There are few of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin," he writes in his diary, "than the comparison how a man of genius, nay, of avowed worth, is received everywhere, with the reception which a mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of fortune meets." "He had not yet learned — he never did learn" — says Principal Shairp, "that lesson, that the genius he had received was his allotted and sufficient portion, and that his wisdom lay in making the most of this rare inward gift, even on a meagre allowance of this world's external goods."

Unfortunately for Burns he did not confine himself to the cultivated circles of Edinburgh. He frequented the social clubs that gathered nightly in the taverns. Here he threw off all restraint, and mirth frequently became fast and furious. Deep drinking, rough raillery, and coarse songs made up the sum of these revellings, which served at once to deprave the poet's character and to ruin his reputation.

In 1787 the ostensible purpose for which Burns had come to Edinburgh was accomplished, and a second volume of his poems was issued by the leading publisher of the city. He then made two brief tours through the

[1] Gold.

border districts and the highlands of Scotland for the purpose of visiting points celebrated for beautiful scenery or consecrated by heroic deeds. He returned for a few months to Edinburgh; but the coarse revelries of his previous visit had undermined his influence, and he met with only a cold reception.

Before leaving the city he received an appointment in the Excise. He had hoped for something better. But he wrote to a friend: "The question is not at what door of fortune's palace we shall enter in, but what doors does she open for us." He also leased a farm at Ellisland, which he had long set his heart on.

Returning to Ayrshire, he married Jean Armour, whom an angered father had thrust from his door. The poet, who was not a hardened reprobate, wrote: "I have married my Jean. I had a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery in my determination, and I durst not trifle with so important a deposit, nor have I any cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tittle-tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disquieted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the country." The truth of this characterization is established by the patience with which Jean bore the irregularities of her husband's life.

His farm at Ellisland proved a failure. His duties as exciseman, besides leading him into bad company, prevented that strict supervision of farm work which was necessary to success. He suffered much from depression of spirits, to which the recollections of a wayward life con-

tributed no small part. "Alas!" he writes, "who would wish for many years? What is it but to drag existence until our joys gradually expire, and leave us in a night of misery, like the gloom which blots out the stars, one by one from the face of heaven, and leaves us without a ray of comfort in the howling waste?"

He continued to find at intervals solace in poetry. One morning he heard the report of a gun and shortly after saw a poor wounded hare limping by. The condition of the little animal touched his heart and called forth the excellent poem "On Seeing a Wounded Hare Limp by Me," written in classic English: —

"Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains:
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield."

We meet with this tender sympathy with nature, and strong sense of fellowship with lower creatures, in many of his poems. It is one secret of their charm. In the poem "To a Mouse" is the following: —

"I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion
An' fellow-mortal!"

The cold blasts of a winter night remind him of —

"Ilk happing bird, wee helpless thing,
That in the merry months o' spring
Delighted me to hear thee sing,

What comes o' thee ?
Where wilt thou cower thy chittering wing,
And close thy e'e ? "

The choicest products of this sojourn at Ellisland are the immortal "Tale o' Tam o' Shanter" and "To Mary in Heaven." The latter is a song of deep pathos. Years before he had loved his "Highland Mary" with a deep devotion. Their parting by the banks of Ayr — which the untimely death of Mary made the last — was attended with vows of eternal constancy. Her memory never vanished from the poet's mind. On the anniversary of her death, in October, 1786, he grew sad and wandered about his farmyard the whole night in deep agitation of mind. As dawn approached he was persuaded by his wife to enter the house, when he sat down and wrote those pathetic lines, beginning: —

"Thou lingering star with lessening ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn,
Again thou usherest in the day
My Mary from my soul was torn.
O Mary, dear departed shade !
Where is thy place of blissful rest ?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid ?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ? "

In 1791 Burns removed to Dumfries and gave his whole time to the duties of the Excise, for which he received seventy pounds a year. At Ellisland he had written: —

"To make a happy fireside clime,
For weans and wife,
Is the true pathos and sublime
Of human life."



TAM O'SHANTER INN.

"Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely."
– BURNS

Unfortunately he did not live as wisely as he sang. His spirit became soured toward those more favored by fortune. His nights were frequently spent at the tavern with drinking cronies. His life is summed up in one of his letters: "Hurry of business, grinding the faces of the publican and the sinner on the merciless wheels of the Excise, making ballads, and then drinking and singing them; and, over and above all, correcting the press of two different publications."

In 1792 his aid was solicited in the preparation of "Melodies of Scotland." He entered into the undertaking with enthusiasm. When the editor, George Thompson of Edinburgh, once sent him some money in return for a number of songs, the poet wrote: "I assure you, my dear sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savor of affectation; but, as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that honor which crowns the upright stature of Robert Burns's integrity, on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-pact transaction and from that moment commence entire stranger with you." In view of the financial straits into which he shortly afterward came, this must be regarded as an unwise sacrifice of prudence to sentiment.

Burns strongly sympathized with the revolutionary movement in France; and to this feeling no less than to his Scottish patriotism, if we may believe his own account, we owe the thrilling lines of "Bruce's Address," which Carlyle says "should be sung with the throat of the whirlwind." The excellence of this poem has been questioned by Wordsworth and others; but let the following lines be

read with something of the heroic fervor with which they were composed, and all doubts will be set at rest: —

"Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha so base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee."

The end was drawing near. The irregularities of his life had undermined his strong constitution. He was often serious. "I find that a man may live like a fool," he said to his friend, "but he will scarcely die like one." In April, 1796, he wrote: "Alas, my dear Thompson, I fear it will be some time before I tune my lyre again! By Babel streams I have sat and wept, almost ever since I wrote you last; I have known existence only by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say, with poor Ferguson, —

"'Say wherefore has an all-indulgent heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?'"

His last days were illumined now and then by flashes of poetic fire. For Jessie Lewars, a young girl that had seen the poet's need, and from sympathy had come into his home to assist in domestic duties, he wrote the following beautiful lines: —

"Oh! wert thou in the cauld, cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,[1]
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee.

[1] Point of the compass.

Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield[1] should my bosom be,
To share it a', to share it a'.

"Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there:
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign,
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen."

The 21st of July, 1796, with his children around his bed, the great poet of Scotland passed away. Let our final judgment of him as a man be tempered by the gentle spirit he commends in the "Address to the Unco Guid": —

"Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin[2] wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

"Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each chord — its various tone,
Each spring — its various bias;
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what's resisted."

[1] Shelter. [2] Trifle.

As a poet Burns's life was incomplete. His struggle with poverty and his bad habits left him only fragments of his power to be devóted to literature. He was not guided by the controlling influence of a great purpose. His efforts were spasmodic — the result of accidental circumstances. His genius has not the range of Shakespeare's; but within its limit it is unsurpassed. He was the greatest peasant poet that ever lived. Unlike Wordsworth, in whom the reflective element is largely developed, Burns is a painter of nature. He has glorified the landscape of his native land. Beyond all other poets he has caught the beauty, the humor, the pathos, of everyday life. He was thoroughly honest in his best writings. There is no attitudinizing in his poems, no pretence to unreal sentiment. He was a poet —

> "Whose songs gushed from his heart,
> As drops from the clouds of summer,
> Or tears from the eyelids start."

He felt deeply, and then poured forth his song because he could not otherwise find peace. He could not endure affectation, rant, hypocrisy. At heart devout before the great Author and Preserver of all things, he yet rebelled against some of the hard features religion had assumed. In his "Epistle to a Young Friend," his real feelings are indicated: —

> "The great Creator to revere,
> Must sure become the creature;
> But still the preaching cant forbear,
> And ev'n the rigid feature:
> Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
> Be complaisance extended;
> An Atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
> For Deity offended.



THE AULD BRIG O' DOON.

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fair;
How can ye chant, ye little birds,
And I sae fu' o' care!

"When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or, if she gie a random sting,
It may be little minded;
But when on life we're tempest-driven,
A conscience but a canker —
A correspondence fixed wi' Heaven,
Is sure a noble anchor."

More than any other man he saw the beauty of a sincere religious life, to a portrayal of which he devoted the best of his poems. His sensibilities were extraordinarily sensitive and strong. "There is scarcely any earthly object," he says, "gives me more — I do not know if I should call it pleasure — but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me — than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood or high plantation in a cloudy winter day and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees and raving over the plain. . . . I listened to the birds and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs or frighten them to another station." With such a sensitive nature it is no wonder that we find contradictions in his poetry. The storm of emotion drives quickly from grave to gay, from high to low. He has written much that ought to be and will be forgotten. But upon the whole, his poetry is elevating in its tone — a treasure for which we ought to be thankful. It is the voice of a man who, with all his weakness and sin, was still, in his best moments, honest, manly, penetrating, and powerful.

AGE OF SCOTT.

PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

Criticism. — Francis Jeffrey (1773–1850). Lawyer and critic, editor of the *Edinburgh Review* (1802–1829), and brilliant writer on literature, politics, and ethics.

William Hazlitt (1778–1830). Critic and author of "Character of Shakespeare's Plays" (1817), "A View of the English Stage" (1818), "Lectures on the English Poets" (1818), "Lectures on the English Comic Writers" (1819), "Literature of the Elizabethan Age" (1821), "Table-Talk" (1824), "The Spirit of the Age" (1825).

Charles Lamb (1775–1834). Critic and essayist. Author of "Rosamond Gray" (1798), "Tales from Shakespeare" (1805), and "Essays of Elia" (1822–1824).

John Wilson (1785–1854). Critic and essayist, whose *nom de plume* was "Christopher North." Author of "Noctes Ambrosianæ," etc.

John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854). Critic, novelist, biographer; author of "Adam Blair" (1822), "Life of Burns" (1825), "Life of Scott" (1837), etc.

Leigh Hunt (1784–1859). Author of "Juvenilia" (1802), "Classic Tales" (1807), "The Story of Rimini" (1816), etc.

History. — Henry Hallam (1778–1859). Author of "Views of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages" (1818), "Constitutional History of England" (1827), and "Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries" (1838).

William Mitford (1744–1827). Author of a "History of Greece" (1784–1818), "History and Doctrine of Christianity" (1823), etc.

Female Novelists and Poets. — Ann Radcliffe (1764–1823). Novelist of Romantic School, and author of "The Romance of the

Forest" (1791), "The Mysteries of Udolpho" (1794), and several others.

Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849). Novelist of Irish life; author of "Castle Rackrent" (1801), "Moral Tales" (1801), "Tales of a Fashionable Life" (1811), etc.

Jane Austen (1775–1817). Novelist of social life; author of "Sense and Sensibility" (1811), "Pride and Prejudice" (1812), "Emma" (1816), etc.

Jane Porter (1776–1850). Novelist of the Romantic type; author of "Thaddeus of Warsaw" (1803), "The Scottish Chiefs" (1810), etc.

Anna Letitia Barbauld (1743–1825). Poet and prose writer; author of "Lessons for Children" (1808), etc.

Felicia Dorothea Hemans (1794–1835). Poet and author of "The Vespers of Palermo" (1823), a tragedy, "The Forest Sanctuary" (1827), "Songs of the Affections" (1830), etc. Several of her shorter poems — "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers," "The Homes of England," "The Hour of Death" — will always remain popular.

Hannah More (1745–1833). Poet, novelist, dramatist, and moral essayist; author of "Percy," a drama written for Garrick, which was acted with success in 1777, "Sacred Dramas" (1782,) "Cœlebs in Search of a Wife" (1809), "Character of St. Paul" (1815), "Moral Sketches" (1818), etc.

Joanna Baillie (1762–1851). Poet and dramatist; author of "Plays of the Passions" (1812), etc.

Poetry. — Thomas Campbell (1777–1844). Author of "The Pleasures of Hope" (1799), "Poems" (1803), "Gertrude of Wyoming" (1809).

John Keats (1795–1821). Author of "Poems" (1817), "Endymion" (1818), "Hyperion" (1820).

Robert Southey (1774–1843). Poet and historian; author of "Joan of Arc" (1796), "Thalaba, the Destroyer" (1801), "The Curse of Kehama" (1810), "A History of Brazil," "Life of Nelson," and a hundred other volumes.

Thomas Moore (1779–1852). Poet and biographer; author of "Epistles" (1806), "Lalla Rookh" (1817), "Life of Byron" (1830), "Irish Melodies" (1834), etc.

Thomas Hood (1798–1845). Poet, editor, humorist; author of "Whims and Oddities" (1826), "Up the Rhine" (1839), a delightful piece of humor, and editor of *Hood's Magazine*, and other periodicals.

Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864). Poet and prose writer; author of "Gebir" (1798), "Count Julian" (1812), "Imaginary Conversations" (1824–1846), etc.

John Keble (1792–1866). Poet, clergyman, and Oxford professor; author of "The Christian Year" (1827), a series of poems for the Sundays and holidays of the church year.

Samuel Rogers (1763–1855). Author of the "Pleasures of Memory" (1792), "Columbus" (1812), "Human Life," etc. As a man of wealth he entertained many literary celebrities, his breakfasts being more famous than his poems.

GREAT REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

Sir Walter Scott.	Samuel Taylor Coleridge.
Lord Byron.	Percy Bysshe Shelley.
William Wordsworth.	Thomas De Quincey.

VII.

AGE OF SCOTT.

(1800-1832.)

Favorable political condition — Triumphs of democracy — Periods not sharply defined — Effect of French Revolution — Growing Intelligence — Periodicals — Critics: Jeffrey, Hazlitt, Lamb, Wilson, Lockhart — History: Hallam, Mitford — Prominence of women: Ann Radcliffe, Maria Edgeworth, Jane Austen — Poetry — Thomas Campbell — John Keats — Robert Southey — Thomas Moore — Sir Walter Scott — Lord Byron — William Wordsworth — Samuel Taylor Coleridge — Percy Bysshe Shelley — Thomas De Quincey.

The political condition of England during this period was not unfavorable to literature. In 1800 the "Emerald Isle" was joined to England under the title of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The Napoleonic wars increased England's prestige as a world-power. She came into possession of the colonies of Spain, of Holland, and of France. Waterloo finally ended her long struggle with the French. Her victories at Copenhagen and Trafalgar made her the undisputed mistress of the seas. The population largely increased. Agriculture became more flourishing, and the inventions of Watt and Arkwright helped to build up prosperous cities in northern England and to increase the national wealth. In 1815 London was lighted with gas; and a few years later an effective police force was organized for the city, which

had then reached a population of a million and a half. Though the transition from hand labor to machinery imposed great hardships on the working classes for a time, and thus created much social discontent and suffering, it laid the foundation of the subsequent supremacy of England as a manufacturing and commercial nation.

Though the influence of the government was generally against the democratic tendencies of the times, the new sense of human right and freedom could not be extinguished. Though held in check for a time, it achieved later notable triumphs in Parliament. In 1828 the Test Act, by which Dissenters and Roman Catholics were excluded from government office, was repealed, and the following year Roman Catholics were admitted to Parliament. In 1832 the famous Reform Bill was passed, by which the "rotten boroughs" were abolished, the list of voters was increased by half a million, and the manufacturing cities of northern England — Birmingham, Manchester, and many others — were accorded representation.

It will be understood that the periods into which the history of any literature is divided are not sharply defined. They pass gradually from one into another under the operation of new influences. The age of Scott, a designation less descriptive than convenient, is characterized by the full development of the democratic and romantic tendencies originating in the latter part of the preceding period. They reached their climax in the literary outburst that has been called, not without considerable justification, the "Second Creative Period." A copious literature, new both in form and spirit, bloomed forth. Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, De Quincey, and others

were men of original and creative genius; and in a retrospect of the long vista of English literature, they stand out with striking prominence. With an inadequate apprehension of the tendencies of the age, three of these writers — Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey — have been designated the Lake School of Poets, from their residence in the northern part of England.

The chief event that immediately affected literature, in the closing decade of the eighteenth and the first third of the nineteenth century, was the French Revolution. It not only crystallized the floating thought and feeling of France, but it brought home to the English heart the vague democratic movement of the time. The rights of man, as distinguished from the privileges of class or caste, became the subject of earnest and enthusiastic examination. The literary men of England generally arrayed themselves, consciously or unconsciously, on the side of progress or of conservatism. Dreams of a golden age of right and happiness took hold of men like Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey; and for a time, as we shall see, they contemplated founding an ideal democracy, or Pantisocracy, beyond the sea. On the other hand, Scott, in whom the romantic movement reached its climax, turned away from the turmoil of dissension and conflict to write, in prose and poetry, of a chivalrous past. Byron satirized the social conditions about him; and Shelley, with a spirit still more radical and violent, sought to overturn the most sacred beliefs and institutions.

This period was one of rapidly growing intelligence. Through the labors of Andrew Bell and Joseph Lan-

caster, a new impulse was given to popular education, and hundreds of schools were founded. In 1818 the government manifested its interest in education by appointing a committee to inspect the public schools. Periodicals were multiplied; and very significant for literature was the founding of the great magazines and reviews, which became the vehicles, not only of vigorous criticism, but also of excellent miscellaneous productions. They gathered about them groups of gifted writers and elevated the taste of the reading public. The *Edinburgh Review* was founded in 1802, the *London Quarterly*, its political opponent, in 1809, *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1817, the *Westminster Review* in 1824, and *Fraser's Magazine* in 1830. Two weekly papers of high order, the *Spectator* and the *Athenæum*, both of which figure in later literature, were established in 1828.

One of the best-known critics of the time was Francis Jeffrey. He was at the head of the *Edinburgh Review* for more than a quarter of a century and wielded his critical pen with imperious spirit. Though Whiggish in politics, he was conservative in literature and had little patience with the literary innovations of the period. He treated Byron with contempt, belittled Scott, and pursued Wordsworth with relentless severity. But the results of this unsympathetic and often ferocious criticism were not without benefit. Apart from the replies it provoked, it forced an examination of fundamental principles, and grounded the new literature on a surer foundation.

William Hazlitt justly ranks as one of the foremost of

English critics. Charles Lamb's quaint "Essays of Elia" give him enduring fame. His "Dissertation upon Roast Pig" is a noted piece of humorous writing. John Wilson, for many years the leading spirit of *Blackwood*, has earned a place in English literature under the pseudonym of "Christopher North." John Lockhart, at first a contributor to *Blackwood*, and afterward editor of the *Quarterly Review*, was conservative in his tastes and made severe attacks both upon Keats and Tennyson in his earlier poems. His "Life of Scott," his father-in-law, is one of the best biographies in any language. Leigh Hunt's works were originally contributions to periodical literature.

There are two historians that deserve mention, though neither attained the heights of the great triumvirate of the preceding period. Henry Hallam was both a historian and literary critic, distinguished for his extensive research and judicial fairness. His "View of the State of Europe during the Middle Ages," which was published in 1818, his "Constitutional History of England," which dates from 1827, and his "Introduction to the Literature of Europe in the Fifteenth, Sixteenth, and Seventeenth Centuries," which was completed in 1839, are still standard works. By reason of his conversative tastes, he is somewhat less trustworthy as a critic than as a historian. William Mitford's "History of Greece," which was completed in 1818, is recognized as a work of scholarly ability, though it is seriously marred by the prejudices of the author. He was almost fanatical in his opposition to the democratic tendencies of his age.

One of the most remarkable features of this period is the place that woman now assumes in literature. Awak-

ing to a sense of the conventional restraints by which she had long been surrounded, she began to desire a larger freedom of thought and action. The title of Mary Wollstonecraft's book, "Vindication of the Rights of Woman," is indicative of the rising movement. An unusually large group of female writers, brought up under the influence of the closing decades of the eighteenth century, distinguished themselves in fiction and poetry. Ann Radcliffe belonged to the romantic school and employed "castles with secret passages, trap-doors, forests, banditti, abductions, sliding panels," as the machinery of her stories. Maria Edgeworth was a novelist of Irish life, and Scott said that her work suggested his Scottish romances. Jane Austen, who wrote realistic stories of contemporary social life, has been called the mother of the modern novel. Other writers belonging to this galaxy are Anna Letitia Barbauld, Jane Porter, whose "Thaddeus of Warsaw" and "Scottish Chiefs" are still popular, and Hannah More, a poet, dramatist, and novelist of real ability. A list of their principal works will be found on a preceding page.

Poetry, recovering from its brief eclipse in the preceding period, shines forth with unwonted splendor. Apart from the great representative names to be considered later, — Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, — the list of secondary poets is unusually long and unusually good.

Thomas Campbell early showed a striking literary precocity. At the age of twenty-two, he published the "Pleasures of Hope," the success of which was instantaneous. Its opening lines are felicitous and well known: —

> "At summer eve, when Heaven's ethereal bow
> Spans with bright arch the glittering hills below,

Why to yon mountain turns the musing eye,
Whose sunbright summit mingles with the sky?
Why do those cliffs of shadowy tint appear
More sweet than all the landscape smiling near?
'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view,
And robes the mountain in its azure hue."

He did not profit much by his early success. The booksellers offered him lucrative employment; but through procrastination and constitutional indolence, he disappointed their expectations and forfeited their confidence. In 1809 he published his romantic poem of "Gertrude of Wyoming," the scene of which is laid in Pennsylvania. It ranks next to the "Pleasures of Hope." But it is, perhaps, in his lyrical pieces, among which are "Lochiel's Warning," "Hohenlinden," "Battle of the Baltic," "Ye Mariners of England," "O'Connor's Child," "Hallowed Ground," "The Soldier's Dream," "The Last Man," that he attained the highest excellence. Elected lord rector of the University of Glasgow in 1826, he discharged his duties with a zeal that won admiration. He died in 1844 and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

John Keats was a brilliant but short-lived poet. Had he lived to fulfil his early promise, it is probable that he would have stood among the first poets of the period. As it is, several of his poems take rank among the choicest productions of the English muse. He began his literary career by the publication of some sonnets, which were favorably received. The sonnet on "Chapman's Homer," containing the lines, —

"Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken," —

is truly admirable. A volume of poems, published in 1817, was coldly received. The following year appeared "Endymion," which contains some fine passages, the opening lines being well known: —

> "A thing of beauty is a joy forever;
> Its loveliness increases; it will never
> Pass into nothingness; but still will keep
> A bower quiet for us, and a sleep
> Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing."

The "lusciousness of the rhythm," which breaks completely with Augustan models, gave offence to conservative critics. The poem was savagely attacked both in *Blackwood* and the *Quarterly*. In 1820 Keats sent forth his third volume, in which his poetic genius conquered recognition and secured for him an honorable place in English literature. His "Hyperion," "Lamia," "Eve of St. Agnes," and his odes to a "Nightingale," a "Grecian Urn," and "Autumn," are all exquisite productions. He went to Italy shortly after the appearance of this volume, where he died of pulmonary consumption early in 1821. His headstone bears the simple inscription, dictated by himself, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

Robert Southey is an example of untiring industry in literary pursuits. He depended upon literature for a living, and Byron pronounced him "the only existing man of letters." He worked with mechanical regularity and produced more than a hundred volumes of poetry and prose. He was a great lover of books; and his library, which contained fourteen thousand volumes, De Quincey called his wife. When in his old age he became speechless and imbecile, he still wandered around his library,

taking down his books and fondly pressing them to his lips.

As a poet, Southey was ambitious; and nourishing his talents on Tasso, Ariosto, and Spenser, he contemplated and composed several lengthy epics. His "Joan of Arc," a youthful performance, was well received. "Thalaba" was published in 1801, "Madoc," on which the poet was content to rest his fame, in 1805, and the "Curse of Kehama" in 1810. His longer poems abound in splendid imagery, but they are lacking in personal interest and dramatic art. He was made poet laureate in 1813.

"Thalaba, the Destroyer" is a rhythmical romance in irregular and unrhymed measure. The opening lines, perhaps the best in the poem, are very pleasing: —

"How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain
Breaks the serene of heaven:
In full-orbed glory yonder moon divine
Rolls through the dark blue depths.
Beneath her steady ray
The desert circle spreads,
Like the round ocean, girdled with the sky.
How beautiful is night!"

Among his best short pieces are "The Scholar," "Auld Cloots," "March to Moscow," "Mary the Maid of the Inn," "Lodore," "The Well of St. Keyne."

In prose Southey wrote criticism, biography, and history, in all which he exhibited great learning and an admirable style. His "Life of Nelson" is a classic biography. Among his other prose writings are the "Life of Cowper,"

"Life of Wesley," "The British Admirals," and "History of the Peninsular War." "The uprightness and beauty of his character," says Saintsbury, "his wonderful helpfulness to others, and the uncomplaining way in which he bore what was almost poverty, are not more generally acknowledged than the singular and pervading excellence of his English prose style, the robustness of his literary genius, and his unique devotion to literature."

Thomas Moore, born of Irish parentage in Dublin, always remained an Irish patriot, and labored both in poetry and prose to advance the interests of his country. By his keen satires he brought reproach upon the oppressors of Ireland; and by his songs he awakened and sustained tender and patriotic sentiments. No other poet except Byron was more popular in his day. He possessed great social gifts, — a good voice, admirable conversational talents, and a musical skill that enabled him to render effectively his erotic and patriotic songs. Though his poetry does not possess the highest qualities, — being artificial rather than genuine, glittering rather than true, — yet his poems, with their wit, sentiment, melody, are perused, especially by young people, with more interest than those of any of his contemporaries, with the possible exception of Byron.

In 1801 he published a collection of amatory verses, which earned him the position of poet laureate, and gained him the title of "the young Catullus of his day." In 1806 he sent forth another volume, which the *Edinburgh Review* denounced as "a corrupter of morals." Enraged at the severity of the criticism, the poet challenged Jeffrey. But the duel was stopped by the police, and on examination the pistols were found charged only with "villainous salt-

petre" — a circumstance that Byron did not fail to notice in his "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers": —

> "Can none remember that eventful day,
> That ever glorious, almost fatal fray,
> When Little's leadless pistol met his eye,
> And Bow Street myrmidons stood laughing by?"

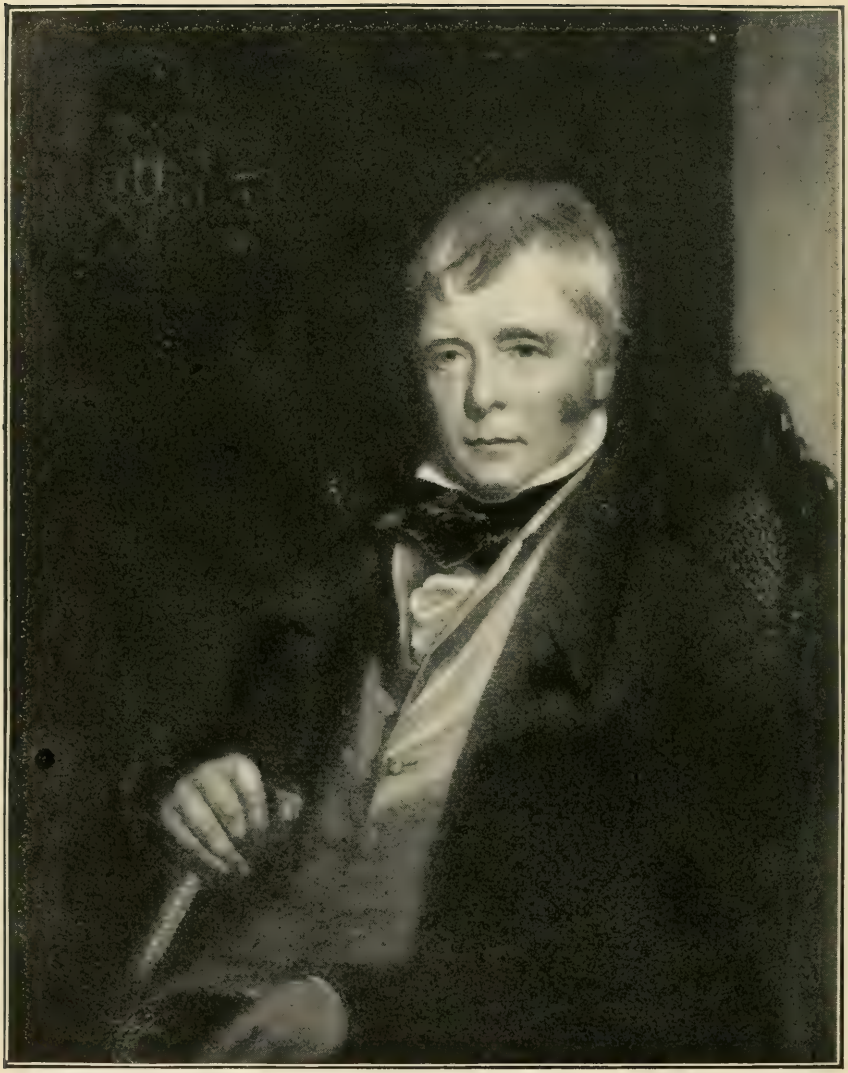
Among Moore's most popular and most enduring productions are the "Irish Melodies" — a collection of charming lyrics, tender, convivial, or patriotic, designed to accompany popular airs. Their composition was a congenial task, one well suited to the poet's powers. He was for Ireland what Burns was for Scotland — the singer of his people. But the songs of the two poets, while alike in attaining a high excellence, are very different. Moore is artificial, polished, reminding us of the drawing-room; Burns is unconventional and genuine, suggesting the green fields and singing birds.

Moore wrote two long and ambitious poems, "Lalla Rookh" and "The Loves of the Angels." Both are Oriental in character, but the former is far superior in interest and felicity of treatment. Through a course of laborious reading, he familiarized himself with Oriental customs and scenery. Lalla Rookh is an Oriental princess who with great pomp journeys from Delhi to Bucharia, where she is to marry the king. On the way she is entertained by a young minstrel, whose tender, passionate songs win her heart. With sadness she approaches the end of her journey; but what is her joy to find the amiable minstrel her future husband and the King of Bucharia! The poem is true in its local coloring, sparkling with Orien-

tal gems, and fragrant with Oriental musk and roses. A single quotation from the "Paradise and Peri" must suffice: —

> "Go, wing thy flight from star to star,
> From world to luminous world, as far
> As the universe spreads its flaming wall;
> Take all the pleasures of all the spheres,
> And multiply each through endless years,
> One minute of Heaven is worth them all."

Among his prose works are "The Epicurean," an Eastern romance, the "Life of Sheridan," which is a friendly panegyric, and the "Life of Byron," which does not reveal the whole truth touching that nobleman's life and character.



Engraved by G. H. Phillips in mezzotint after the painting by C. R. Leslie, R.A., formerly in the possession of Mr. Constable of Edinburgh, now in the collection of Alaric A. Watts, Esq.

Yr Walter Scott

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE greatest literary figure during the first quarter of the present century is undoubtedly Sir Walter Scott. He occupied scarcely less relative prominence for a time than did Samuel Johnson a few decades earlier. It is not uncommon to associate his name with the period in which he was preëminent. He distinguished himself in both poetry and prose. He created a species of romantic poetry that was received with great applause until it was eclipsed by the intenser productions of Byron. "Why did you quit poetry?" a friend once inquired of Scott. "Because Byron beat me," was the remarkably frank reply. He then turned to fiction; and in his splendid series of historical romances he stands preëminent not only among the writers of England, but of the world.

Sir Walter Scott descended from a line distinguished for sports and arms rather than letters. One of his remote ancestors was once given the choice of being hanged, or marrying a woman who had won the prize for ugliness in four counties. After three days' deliberation he decided in favor of "meikle-mouthed Meg," who, be it said, made him an excellent wife. It was from her that our author possibly inherited his large mouth. His father was a dignified man, orderly in his habits, and fond of ceremony. It is said that he "absolutely loved a funeral"; and from far and near he was sent for to superintend mortuary ceremonies. As a lawyer he frequently lost clients by

insisting that they should be just — a sturdy uprightness that was transmitted to his illustrious son.

Sir Walter's mother was a woman of superior native ability and of excellent education. She had a good memory and a talent for narration. "If I have been able to do anything in the way of painting past times," he once wrote, "it is very much from the studies with which she presented me." He loved his mother tenderly; and the evening after his burial a number of small objects that had once belonged to her were found arranged in careful order in his desk, where his eye might rest upon them every morning before he began his task. This is an instance of filial piety as touching as it is beautiful.

Walter Scott, the ninth of twelve children, was born in Edinburgh, Aug. 15, 1771. On account of sickness he was sent into the country, where his childhood was spent in the midst of attractive scenery. Left lying out of doors one day, a thunder-storm arose; and when his aunt ran to bring him in, she found him delighted with the raging elements, and shouting, "Bonny, bonny!" at every flash of lightning. One of the old servants spoke of him as "a sweet-tempered bairn, a darling with all about the house." But at the same time he was active, fearless, and passionate. The Laird of Raeburn, a relative, once wrung the neck of a pet starling. "I flew at his throat like a wild cat," said Sir Walter, as he recalled the circumstance fifty years afterward, "and was torn from him with no little difficulty."

At school he established a reputation for irregular ability. He possessed great energy, vitality, and pride, and was naturally a leader among his fellow-pupils. He

had the gift of story-telling in a remarkable degree. He found difficulty in confining himself to the prescribed studies and persistently declined to learn Greek. In Latin he made fair attainments. He delighted in the past, reverenced existing institutions, sympathized with royalty, and as a boy, as in after life, he was a Tory.

As a student of law at the University of Edinburgh Scott was noted for his gigantic memory and enormous capacity for work. His literary tastes ran in the direction of mediæval life, and he devoured legend and romance and border song with great avidity. He learned Italian to read Ariosto, and Spanish to read Cervantes, whose novels, he said, "first inspired him with the desire to excel in fiction." But his memory retained only what suited his genius. He used to illustrate this characteristic by the story of an old borderer who once said to a Scotch divine: "No, sir, I have no command of my memory. It only retains what hits my fancy; and probably, sir, if you were to preach to me for two hours, I would not be able, when you finished, to remember a word you had been saying."

As a lawyer Scott was not notably successful. He was fond of making excursions over the country to visit localities celebrated for natural beauty or historic events. In view of this habit, his father reproached him as being better fitted for a pedler than for a lawyer. He was rather fond, it must be said, of living —

"One crowded hour of glorious life."

"But drunk or sober," such is the testimony of one of his companions at this time, "he was aye the gentleman."

Scott practised at the bar fourteen years; but his earnings never amounted to much more than two hundred pounds a year. In 1799 he was made sheriff of Selkirkshire on a salary of three hundred pounds; and a few years later he became clerk of the session, — an officer in the court of Edinburgh, — a position that increased his income to sixteen hundred pounds. He was not eloquent as a pleader; his tastes were averse to legal drudgery; and his proclivities for poetry and for rambling over the country did not enhance his reputation as a lawyer. But whether practising at the bar or wandering over the country, "he was makin' himself a' the time" — storing his mind with the facts, legends, and characters which he was afterward to embody in his immortal works.

The life of Scott was not without its romance, and, — but for the effect upon his character and works, we might say, — alas, its sorrow. He one day offered his umbrella to a beautiful young lady who was coming out of the Greyfriars church during a shower. It was graciously accepted. The incident led to an acquaintance, and, at least on the part of Scott, to a deep attachment. His large romantic nature was filled with visions of happiness. Then came disappointment. For some reason the fair Margaret rejected his attentions and married a rival. After the first resentment was past, this attachment remained throughout his life a source of tender recollections. Years afterward he went to visit Margaret's mother and noted in his diary: "I fairly softened myself, like an old fool, with recalling old stories till I was fit for nothing but shedding tears and repeating verses for the whole night." Within a twelvemonth of his

disappointment, urged on it may be by his pride, he married Miss Carpenter, a lady of French birth and parentage. Though it was "a bird of paradise mating with an eagle," she made a good wife, and the union was upon the whole a happy one.

Though Scott's greatest literary work was to be in prose, he began with poetry. His first undertaking was a translation from the German of Bürger's spectral ballad, "Lenore." Though his rendering is spirited, he was far too healthy-minded to be perfectly at home in treating spectral themes. He soon turned to more congenial subjects. From his college days he had been making a collection of old Scottish ballads. In 1802 he published in two volumes "The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border," which was an immediate success.

This "proved to be a well," says Carlyle, "from which flowed one of the broadest rivers. Metrical Romances (which in due time pass into Prose Romances); the old life of men resuscitated for us; it is a mighty word! Not as dead tradition, but as a palpable presence, the past stood before us. There they were, the rugged old fighting men; in their doughty simplicity and strength, with their heartiness, their healthiness, their stout self-help, in their iron basnets, leather jerkins, jack-boots, in their quaintness of manner and costume; there as they looked and lived. It was like a new-discovered continent in literature."

The native bent of his mind, and his studies for many years, peculiarly fitted him to restore and illustrate the simplicity and violence of the old border life. The transition to original poems, in which the legends and history of the

same region were embodied, was easily made. "The Lay of the Last Minstrel" was published in 1805 and at once became widely popular. More than two thousand copies were sold the first year; and by 1830 the sales reached forty-four thousand copies, bringing the author nearly a thousand pounds.

Three years later "Marmion," his greatest poem, appeared; and this was followed in 1810 by the "Lady of the Lake." They were read with enthusiasm. They were new in subject and treatment. Without any pretension to classical regularity and finish, they were rapid, energetic, and romantic — the style exactly suited to the subject. "I am sensible," the author said, "that if there be anything good about my poetry or prose either, it is a hurried frankness of composition, which pleases soldiers, sailors, and young people of bold and active dispositions." They are so simple in structure and thought as to be easily comprehended; they abound in wild scenes and daring deeds; they are suffused with a patriotic, martial spirit, and the delirious enjoyment of wild outdoor life.

Scott's poetry may be characterized as objective. In place of meditation and mysticism, — a wrestling with the great mystery of existence, — we have graphic descriptions of external objects. He pictures things for us, as in the lines at the opening of "Marmion," descriptive of the castle: —

"The warriors on the turrets high,
Moving athwart the evening sky,
Seemed forms of giant height;
Their armor, as it caught the rays,
Flashed back again the western blaze,
In lines of dazzling light."



LOCH KATRINE AND ELLEN'S ISLE.

"One burnished sheet of living gold,
Loch Katrine lay beneath him rolled,
In all her length far winding lay,
With promontory, creek and bay."
— SCOTT.

Some of his battle scenes are unsurpassed for their vividness and power. His lyric faculty is very great; and some of the songs in "The Lady of the Lake" are almost unequalled in their picturesque melody. Take, for example, Ellen's song, beginning:—

"Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking;
Dream of battle-fields no more,
Days of danger, nights of waking.
In our isle's enchanted hall,
Hands unseen thy couch are strewing;
Fairy strains of music fall,
Every sense in slumber dewing.
Soldier, rest! thy warfare o'er,
Dream of fighting fields no more:
Sleep the sleep that knows not breaking,
Morn of toil, nor night of waking."

Nearly all of Scott's poetry was written in a beautiful little country house at Ashestiel. The locality is vividly depicted in the first canto of "Marmion":—

"November's sky is chill and drear,
November's leaf is red and sear:
Late, gazing down the steepy linn,
That hems our little garden in,
Low in its dark and narrow glen,
You scarce the rivulet might ken,
So thick the tangled greenwood grew,
So feeble trilled the streamlet through:
Now, murmuring hoarse, and frequent seen,
Through bush and briar no longer green,
An angry brook, it sweeps the glade,
Brawls over rock and wild cascade,
And, foaming brown with double speed,
Hurries its waters to the Tweed."

He devoted the first part of the day to his literary work. "Arrayed in his shooting-jacket, or whatever dress he meant to use till dinner-time, he was seated at his desk by six o'clock, all his papers arranged before him in the most accurate order, and his books of reference marshalled around him on the floor, while at least one favorite dog lay watching his eye, just beyond the line of circumvallation. Thus, by the time the family assembled for breakfast, between nine and ten, he had done enough, in his own language, 'to break the neck of the day's work.'"

During the seven years of his residence at Ashestiel, his literary labors included, besides his poetry, a "Life of Dryden," "The Secret History of James I.," and many other works of less importance.

In 1812 Scott moved to Abbotsford, where he spent the rest of his life. He was a man of great personal and family pride. It was his ambition to live in great magnificence and to dispense hospitality on a large scale. He bought a large area of land at an aggregate expense of twenty-nine thousand pounds and erected a baronial castle. Here he realized for a time his ideal of life. He was visited by distinguished men and hero-worshippers from all parts of the world. Indeed, his fame became oppressive. His correspondence was enormous, and as many as sixteen parties of sight-seers visited Abbotsford in a single day.

For his friends Scott was the prince of hosts. Devoting only the earlier part of the day to work, he placed his afternoons wholly at the service of his guests. Hunting was his favorite sport, and he led many a brilliant party over the hills and through the valleys to the echoing

music of his hounds. His large benevolent nature drew men to him. To all classes he was thoroughly kind. "Sir Walter speaks to every man as if they were blood relations," was a common description of his demeanor. Even the dumb animals recognized in him a friend.

Apart from his social enjoyments, Scott found most delight in planting trees. He greatly beautified his estate and imparted a taste for arboriculture to the landholders about him. "Planting and pruning trees," he said, "I could work at from morning to night. There is a sort of self-congratulation, a little self-flattery, in the idea that while you are pleasing and amusing yourself, you are seriously contributing to the future welfare of the country, and that your acorn may send its future ribs of oak to future victories like Trafalgar."

The great mistake in Scott's life lay in his business ventures. Through them came ultimately embarrassment and disaster. In the hope of increasing his income, he established the publishing house of John Ballantyne & Co., in Edinburgh. John Ballantyne was a frivolous, dissipated man, wholly unfit for the management of the enterprise. Scott, though possessing sufficient discernment, was easily led away by his feelings. As a consequence, the warehouses of the new firm were soon filled with a quantity of unsalable stock. Only the extensive sale of his novels saved the company from early bankruptcy. But ultimately the crash came, and in 1825 Scott found himself personally responsible for the enormous debt of one hundred and thirty thousand pounds.

For years he had been the literary sovereign of Great Britain. He had lived in the midst of great splendor at

Abbotsford. To find his means swept away in a single moment was a terrific blow, sufficient to crush an ordinary man. But at no time in his career did Scott exhibit so fully his heroic character. Instead of crushing him, misfortune only called forth his strength. With indomitable will and sturdy integrity he set to work to meet his immense obligations. There is nothing more heroic in the course of English literature. Work after work came from his pen in rapid succession. He well-nigh accomplished his purpose; but at last, as we shall see, his mind and body gave way under the tremendous strain, and he fell a martyr to high-souled integrity.

In 1814, when the affairs of Ballantyne & Co. were in a perplexing condition, Scott took up a work in prose, which he had begun in 1805, and pushed it rapidly to completion. This was "Waverley," the first of that wonderful series which has placed his name at the head of historical novelists. Though published anonymously, as were all its successors, it met with astonishing success. It decided his future literary career. His poetic vein had been exhausted, and Byron's verse was attracting public attention. Henceforth he devoted himself to historical fiction, for which his native powers and previous training were precisely adapted.

For the remainder of his life he composed, in addition to other literary labors, on an average two romances a year, illustrating every period in Scottish, English, and continental history from the time of the Crusades to the middle of the eighteenth century. The series is, upon the whole, remarkably even in excellence; but among the most interesting may be mentioned "Old Mortality,"

which describes the sufferings of the Covenanters; "The Heart of Midlothian," to which many critics assign the highest rank; "Ivanhoe," which is very popular; and "Quentin Durward," which holds a distinguished place.

Before this time attempts at the historical novel had been artificial. Contemporary ways were simply transferred to a more or less remote period, without regard to what is known as "local coloring." While working in the romantic spirit that had already appeared, Scott created in its true sense the historical novel as a real transcript of the past, and raised it to an excellence that has never been surpassed. He brought before the mind a magnificent living panorama, often idealized, indeed, of previous ages. His work is not without defects and limitations; but, "after all, it is such a body of literature as, for complete liberation from any debts to models, fertility and abundance of invention, nobility of sentiment, variety and keenness of delight, nowhere else exists."

In the composition of these works Scott wrote with extraordinary rapidity. "Guy Mannering" is said to have been written in six weeks. Carlyle finds fault with what he calls the "extempore method." But in reality it was not extempore. It had been Scott's delight from childhood to store his capacious memory with the antiquarian and historical information which he embodied in his novels. Instead of laborious special investigations, he had but to draw on this great reservoir of learning. He did not wait for moments of inspiration; but morning after morning he returned to his task, with the same zest, and turned out the same amount of work.

Even acute physical suffering did not overcome his

creative power. He dictated "The Bride of Lammermoor," "The Legend of Montrose," and "Ivanhoe" to amanuenses. His suffering sometimes forced from him cries of agony. When his amanuensis once begged him to stop dictating, he only answered, "Nay, Willie, only see that the doors are fast; I would fain keep all the cry as well as all the wool to ourselves." A few other writers have equalled or even surpassed Scott in the number of novels; but, if we consider the quality of work and the many centuries covered by his romances, we must regard him as still without a successful rival.

The Waverley novels are characterized by largeness of thought and style. They turn on public rather than private interests. In place of narrow social circles, we are introduced into the midst of great public movements. Crusaders, Papists, Puritans, Cavaliers, Roundheads, Jacobites, Jews, freebooters, preachers, schoolmasters, gypsies, beggars, move before us with the reality of life. "His comprehensive power," says Stopford Brooke, "which drew with the same certainty so many characters in so many various classes, was the direct result of his profound sympathy with the simpler feelings of the human heart, and of his pleasure in writing so as to make human life more beautiful and more good in the eyes of men."

Scott's style corresponds to the largeness of his subjects. He paints with a large brush. He could not have achieved distinction in domestic novels, with their petty interests and trifling distinctions. He was an admirer of Miss Austen, in reference to whose manner he said: "The big bow-wow strain I can do myself, like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders ordinary common-

place things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied me." "Scott needed," observes Hutton, "a certain largeness of type, a strongly marked class-life, and, where it was possible, a free out-of-doors life, for his delineations. No one could paint beggars and gypsies, and wandering fiddlers, and mercenary soldiers, and peasants, and farmers, and lawyers, and magistrates, and preachers, and courtiers, and statesmen, and best of all perhaps queens and kings, with anything like his ability."

In 1825, after the failure of Ballantyne & Co., Scott resolutely set to work to pay his creditors. His only resource was his pen. Although his cherished hopes were all blasted, he toiled on indomitably till nature gave way. Two days after the news of the crash reached him, he was working on "Woodstock." In three years he earned and paid over to his creditors no less than forty thousand pounds. If his health had continued, he would have discharged the enormous debt. But unfavorable symptoms began to manifest themselves in 1829, and the following year he had a stroke of paralysis. Though he recovered from it, his faculties never regained their former clearness and strength. Nevertheless, in spite of the urgent advice of physicians and friends, he continued to toil on. "Count Robert of Paris" and "Castle Dangerous" appeared in 1831. But they showed a decline in mental vigor — his magic wand was broken. An entry in his diary at this time is truly pathetic: "The blow is a stunning one, I suppose, for I scarcely feel it. It is singular, but it comes with as little surprise as if I had a remedy ready: yet God knows I am at sea in the dark, and the vessel leaky, I

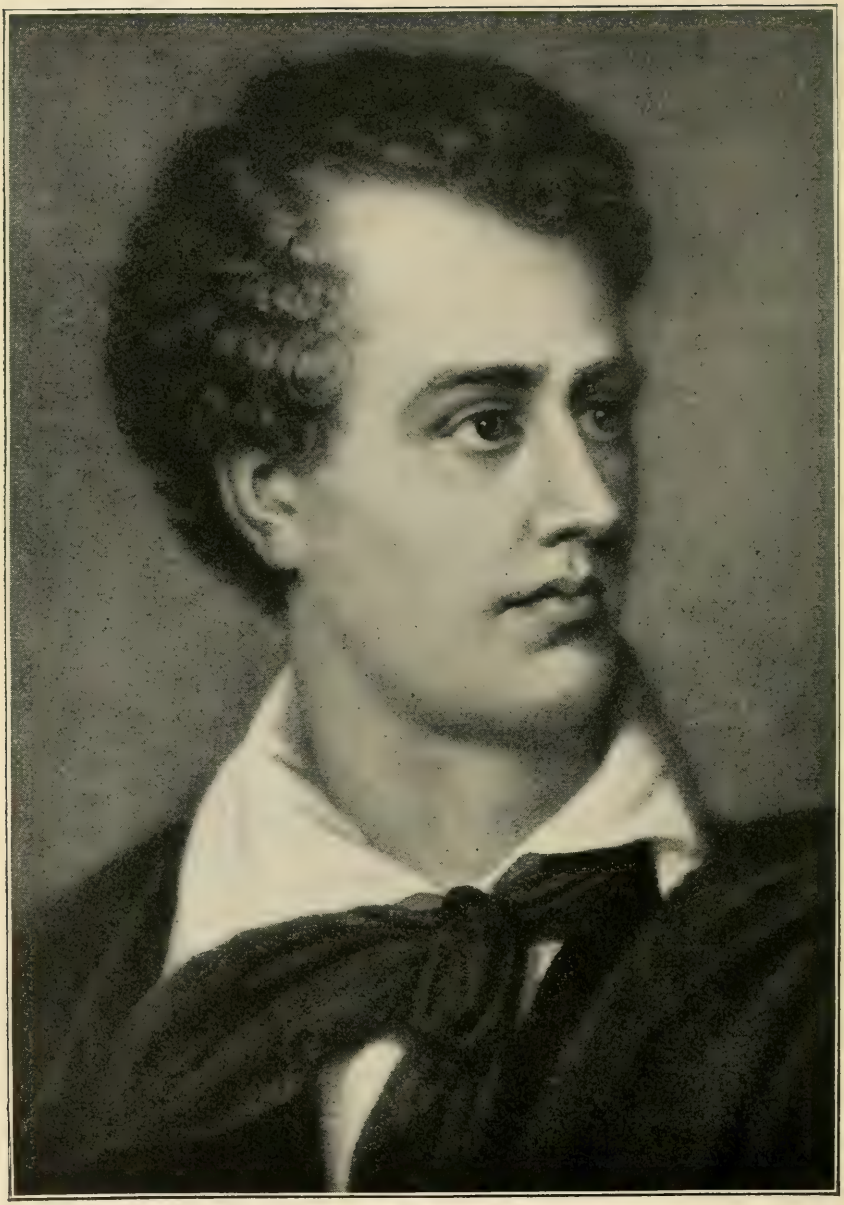
think, into the bargain." It is the pathos of a strong man's awaking to a consciousness that his strength is gone.

A sea voyage was recommended; and in October, 1831, he sailed, in a vessel put at his disposal by the government, for Malta. He visited various points on the Mediterranean, but without material benefit. With the failing of his strength, he longed for Abbotsford. As he caught sight of the towers once more, he sprang up with a cry of delight. A few days before his death he called his son-in-law Lockhart to his bedside. "Lockhart," he said, "I may have but a minute to speak to you. My dear, be a good man, — be virtuous, — be religious, — be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here." These were almost his last words. Four days afterward, during which time he showed scarcely any signs of consciousness, he quietly passed away, Sept. 21, 1832, — one of the grandest, but, also, — if we think of his disappointed hopes, — one of the saddest characters in English literature.



SCOTT'S TOMB—DRYBURG ABBEY.

The Mighty Minstrel breathes no longer.



Byron

LORD BYRON.

No other poet has so embodied himself in his poetry as Byron. Had he not possessed a powerful individuality, his works would long since have perished. He was utterly lacking in the independent creative power of Shakespeare, who never identified himself with his characters. Throughout Byron's many works, we see but one person — a proud, misanthropic, sceptical, ungovernable man. Whatever exaggerations of feature there may be in the portrait, we recognize the essential outlines of the poet himself.

His poetry is largely autobiographical and his utterance intense. Without the careful artistic polish of many minor poets, his manner is rapid, stirring, powerful. He was, perhaps, the most remarkable poetic genius of the century; yet his powers were not turned to the best account. He lacked the balance of a noble character and a well-regulated life. On reading a collection of Burns's poems, he once exclaimed: "What an antithetical mind! — tenderness, roughness — delicacy, coarseness — sentiment, sensuality — soaring and grovelling — dirt and deity — all mixed up in that one compound of inspired clay." The same antitheses might be applied with equal truth to himself.

His place in literature is not yet fixed. "In my mind," wrote Carlyle, "Byron has been sinking at an accelerated

rate for the last ten years and has now reached a very low level." On the other hand, Taine declares that "he is so great and so English, that from him alone we shall learn more truths of his country and his age than from all the rest put together."

When the final verdict is made up, the Scotchman will probably be nearer the truth than the Frenchman. The finest strains of poetry are not to be found in his productions; and the moral sense of the world has become too strong to approve his flippant scepticism or condone his shameful immoralities. He once called himself, "the grand Napoleon of the realms of rhyme." The comparison is not unjust; but in both cases alike the glamour of brilliant achievement has been stripped off, and the forbidding personal character brought to light. Byron was endowed with extraordinary ability; but in large measure he used his powers to vent his misanthropy, to mock at virtue and religion, and to conceal the hideousness of vice.

George Gordon, Lord Byron, was born in London, Jan. 22, 1788. His ancestry runs back in an unbroken line of nobility to the time of William the Conqueror. His father was an unprincipled and heartless profligate, who married an heiress to get her property, and who, as soon as this was squandered, abandoned her. His mother was a proud, passionate, hysterical woman, who alternately caressed and abused her child. At one moment treating him with extravagant fondness, at the next she reproached him as a "lame brat," and flung the poker at his head. "Your mother's a fool," said a school companion to him. "I know it," was the painful and humiliating answer. With such parentage and such rearing, it becomes us to

temper somewhat the severity of our judgment of his character.

He was sent to school at Harrow. "I soon found," wrote the head-master shortly afterward, "that a wild mountain colt had been submitted to my management." Byron did not take much interest in the prescribed studies and never became an accurate scholar. His reading, however, was extensive, and he learned French and Italian. He formed a few warm friendships. During one of his vacations, he fell in love with Mary Ann Chaworth, whose father the poet's grand-uncle had slain in a tavern brawl. He was fifteen, and she was two years older. Looking upon him as a boy, she did not take his attachment seriously, and a year later married another. To Byron, who loved her with all the ardor of his nature, it was a grievous disappointment; and years afterward, when he himself stood at the altar, recollections of her disturbed his soul. The story is told in "The Dream," a poem of much beauty: —

> "The boy had fewer summers, but his heart
> Had far outgrown his years, and to his eye
> There was but one belovèd face on earth."

In 1805 Byron entered Trinity College, Cambridge, with which he was connected for nearly three years. Like many of his predecessors of independent genius — Bacon, Milton, Locke, Gibbon — he cared little for the university training. He was fond of outdoor sports and excelled in cricket, boxing, riding, and shooting. Along with a good deal of miscellaneous reading, he wrote verses, and in 1808 he published a volume entitled "Hours

of Idleness." The work gave little evidence of poetic genius, and was the subject of a rasping critique in the *Edinburgh Review*. "The poesy of this young lord," it was said with some justice, "belongs to the class which neither gods nor men are said to permit. Indeed, we do not recollect to have seen a quantity of verse with so few deviations in either direction from that exact standard."

While affecting contempt for public opinion, Byron was always acutely sensitive to adverse criticism; and the exasperating attack of the *Edinburgh Review* stung him like a blow, rousing him to fury. The result was, a little later, the furious and indiscriminate onslaught known as "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." "Prepare," he shouted, —

> "Prepare for rhyme — I'll publish right or wrong;
> Fools are my theme, let satire be my song."

The first edition was exhausted in a month. Though violent, indiscriminate, and often unjust, the satire indicated something of his latent power.

In 1809, after a few weeks of wild revel at his ancestral seat of Newstead Abbey, he set out upon his travels and visited Portugal, Spain, Greece, and Turkey. His restless spirit found some degree of satisfaction in roving from place to place. While continuing to lead an ill-regulated life, he carried with him the eyes of a keen observer and the sentiments of a great poet. His experience and observation are given in the first two cantos of "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage." Though he affirmed that Childe Harold is a fictitious character, it is impossible not to identify him with the poet himself.

"Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth,
Who ne in virtue's ways did take delight;
But spent his days in riot most uncouth,
And vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of night.
* * * * * *
And now Childe Harold was sore sick at heart,
And from his fellow bacchanals would flee;
'Tis said at times the sullen tear would start,
But pride congealed the drop within his ee:
Apart he stalked in joyless reverie,
And from his native land resolved to go,
And visit scorching climes beyond the sea;
With pleasure drugged he almost longed for woe,
And e'en for change of scene would seek the shades below."

The poem is written in Spenserian stanza, and the antiquated style which he affected at first was soon cast aside. It opened a new field, and its rich descriptions seized the public fancy. It ran through seven editions in four weeks, and to use the author's words, "He woke up one morning to find himself famous."

The other results of his Eastern travels are "The Giaour," "The Bride of Abydos," "The Corsair," and "Lara" — poetical romances of passion and violence, which were received with outbursts of applause. They equalled or surpassed Scott in his own field — a fact which he had the judgment to recognize and the manliness to confess. "The Bride of Abydos" contains, in its opening lines, a beautiful imitation of Mignon's song in Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister": —

"Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime?
Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle,
Now melt into sorrow, now madden to crime!"

"The Corsair" is written in the heroic couplet of Pope. "The stanza of Spenser," Byron says in the dedication, "is perhaps too slow and dignified for narrative, though I confess, it is the measure most after my own heart: Scott alone, of the present generation, has hitherto completely triumphed over the fatal facility of the octosyllabic verse, and this is not the least victory of his fertile and mighty genius; in blank verse, Milton, Thomson, and our dramatists are the beacons that shine along the deep, but warn us from the rough and barren rock on which they are kindled. The heroic couplet is not the most popular measure certainly; but as I did not deviate into the other, from a wish to flatter what is called public opinion, I shall quit it without further apology."

Byron had returned to England in 1812, after an absence of two years; and while the various works mentioned were appearing, he led a fashionable and dissipated life in London. When the right mood was on him, he had the power of making himself highly entertaining. His presence was striking. "As for poets," says Scott, "I have seen all the best of my time and country; and though Burns had the most glorious eye imaginable, I never thought any of them could come up to an artist's notion of the character, except Byron. His countenance is a thing to dream of."

Byron was naturally idolized by women; but never discerning the nobler elements of their character, he set a low estimate upon them. "I regard them," he says, "as very pretty but inferior creatures, who are as little in their place at our tables as they would be in our council chambers. . . . I look upon them as grown-up children."

He was destitute of the power of characterization as we see it in our best novelists and poets. His heroines are all of one type — Oriental beauties, loving and passionate, but without intellectual aspiration and true womanly tenderness.

In 1815 he married Miss Milbanke; but there was no love on either side, and it proved an ill-sorted match. Though an excellent woman, his wife was exacting and unsympathetic. Impatient at his late hours, she inquired when he was going to leave off writing verses. On the other hand, he was fitful, violent, and immoral.

At the end of a year, and after the birth of their daughter Ada, she went to her father's, and informed Byron that she did not intend ever to return to him. The separation created a sensation; and the burden of blame, as was no doubt just, fell upon him. He sank in popular esteem as suddenly as he had risen. He dared not go to the theatres for fear of being hissed, nor to Parliament for fear of being insulted. His poem "Fare Thee Well" was addressed to his wife after their separation. An acquaintance with the facts makes it hard for us to believe in the sincerity of what would otherwise be a pathetic poem: —

"Though my many faults defaced me,
Could no other arm be found
Than the one which once embraced me,
To inflict a cureless wound?

"Yet, oh yet, thyself deceive not,
Love may sink by slow decay,
But by sudden wrench, believe not
Hearts can thus be torn away."

The result of the opprobrium, which this unfortunate event in his life brought upon him, is given in his own words: "I felt that, if what was whispered and muttered and murmured was true, I was unfit for England; if false, England was unfit for me." Accordingly, in 1816, disappointed and burdened at heart, he left his native shore never to return.

"I depart,
Whither I know not; but the hour's gone by,
When Albion's lessening shores could grieve or glad mine eye.

"Once more upon the waters! yet once more!
And the waves bound beneath me as a steed
That knows his rider. Welcome to their roar!
Swift be their guidance, wheresoe'er it lead!
Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvas fluttering strew the gale,
Still I must on; for I am as a weed
Flung from the rock, on ocean's foam to sail,
Where'er the surge may sweep, the tempest's breath prevail."

With this voluntary exile he entered upon a new era of authorship, in which he attained to the full maturity of his powers. At Geneva he wrote the third, and at Venice the fourth canto of "Childe Harold," and at once placed himself among the great masters of English verse. Landscapes of unsurpassed majesty and beauty are portrayed; history lives again; our feelings are stirred with deep emotion. Treasures are found on every page. For example: —

"The sky is changed! — and such a change! O night,
And storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,

From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud,
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud."

Or again: —

"I see before me the gladiator lie:
He leans upon his hand — his manly brow
Consents to death, but conquers agony,
And his drooped head sinks gradually low —
And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
Like the first of a thunder shower; and now
The arena swims around him — he is gone,
Ere ceased the inhuman shout that hailed the wretch who won."

Once more: —

"There is a pleasure in the pathless woods,
There is a rapture on the lonely shore,
There is society where none intrudes,
By the deep sea, and music in its roar:
I love not man the less, but nature more,
From these our interviews, in which I steal
From all I may be or have been before,
To mingle with the universe, and feel
What I can ne'er express, yet cannot all conceal."

At Geneva he wrote the touching story of Bonnivard, "The Prisoner of Chillon," which belongs to the group of romantic tales. There is no resemblance between the hero of the poem and the historic prisoner of Chillon, of whom Byron knew little or nothing at the time he wrote. "When the poem was composed," he frankly confesses, "I was not sufficiently aware of the history of Bonnivard, or I should have endeavored to dignify the subject by

an attempt to celebrate his courage and his virtues." It is a pathetic story, with some beautiful lines: —

"Lake Leman lies by Chillon's walls:
A thousand feet in depth below
Its massy waters meet and flow;
Thus much the fathom-line was sent
From Chillon's snow-white battlement,
Which round about the wave enthrals."

From Switzerland, Byron went to Italy, living for a time at Venice, Ravenna, Pisa, and Genoa. His Italian life was voluptuous and immoral. In every place of sojourn, however, he continued to write, composing many works of high excellence. "Cain" is a powerful drama. One of the characters is Lucifer, of whom Byron apologetically says, "It was difficult for me to make him talk like a clergyman upon the same subjects." "Manfred" and "Sardanapalus" are other dramas. The "Vision of Judgment," a satire on George the Third and "Bob Southey," is not reverent, but it is the wittiest production of its class in our language. "Don Juan," his longest poem, is a conglomerate of wit, satire, and immorality, relieved at intervals by sage reflection and delicate poetic sentiment. It shows at once the author's genius and degradation. Perhaps he never wrote more beautiful lines than these: —

"'Tis sweet to hear,
At midnight on the blue and moonlit deep,
The song and oar of Adria's gondolier,
By distance mellowed o'er the water's sweep.
'Tis sweet to see the evening star appear;
'Tis sweet to listen as the night-winds creep
From leaf to leaf; 'tis sweet to view on high
The rainbow, based on ocean, span the sky.

"'Tis sweet to hear the watch-dog's honest bark
Bay deep-mouthed welcome as we draw near home;
'Tis sweet to know there is an eye will mark
Our coming, and look brighter when we come.
'Tis sweet to be awakened by the lark,
Or lulled by falling waters ; sweet the hum
Of bees, the voice of girls, the song of birds,
The lisp of children, and their earliest words."

Notwithstanding its power and the frequent beauty of single passages, Byron's poetry has serious defects. The rapidity with which he wrote prevented a high degree of artistic finish. Its structure and rhyme are sometimes whimsical or perverse. It is lacking in high seriousness, without which poetry never reaches the greatest heights. It is, indeed, a reflection of the poet's life, and to that extent may be pronounced true ; but because his life was perverse and wrong, his poetry is lacking in divine truth. It brings no helpful message to humanity. His criticism of life is destructive; he never reached the wisdom that replaces evil with good; and in view of these facts, he may justly be said to belong to the Satanic school of letters. "He refreshes us," to use the words of Carlyle, "not with the divine fountain, but too often with vulgar strong waters, stimulating indeed to the taste, but soon ending in dislike, or even nausea."

Though few English authors were ever more popular at home, Byron's influence on the Continent was still greater. "He simply took possession of the Continent of Europe and kept it," says Saintsbury. "He was one of the dominant influences and determining causes of the French Romantic movement; in Germany, though the failure of literary talents and activity of the first order in that coun-

try early in this century made his school less important, he had great power over Heine, its one towering genius; and he was almost the sole master of young Russia, young Italy, young Spain, in poetry. Nor, though his active and direct influence has of course been exhausted by time, can his reputation on the Continent be said ever to have waned."

At length the aimless and voluptuous life he was leading filled him with satiety. He had drained the cup of pleasure to its dregs of bitterness. He began to long for a life of action. "If I live ten years longer," he wrote in 1822, "you will see that it is not all over with me. I don't mean in literature, for that is nothing — and I do not think it was my vocation; but I shall do something."

Greece was at this time struggling for independence from Turkish tyranny. Byron was a friend of liberty; the struggling Greeks touched his sympathies. Accordingly, he embarked for Greece in 1823 to aid them in their struggle. As he was about to depart, the shadow of coming disaster fell upon him. "I have a sort of boding," he said to some friends, "that we see each other for the last time, as something tells me I shall never return from Greece."

He was received at Missolonghi with salvos of musketry and music. He received a military commission, and in his subsequent movements displayed ability and courage. But before he had been of much assistance to the Greeks, he was seized with a virulent fever, and died April 9, 1824. The cities of Greece contended for his body; but it was taken to England, where, sepulture in Westminster Abbey having been refused, it was conveyed to the village church of Hucknall.

Such lives are unutterably sad. Byron possessed what most men spend their lives for in vain — genius, rank, power, fame; yet he lived a wretched man. His peace of mind was broken, and his body prematurely worn by vicious passions. He was himself oppressed with a sense of failure; and less than three months before his death he wrote: —

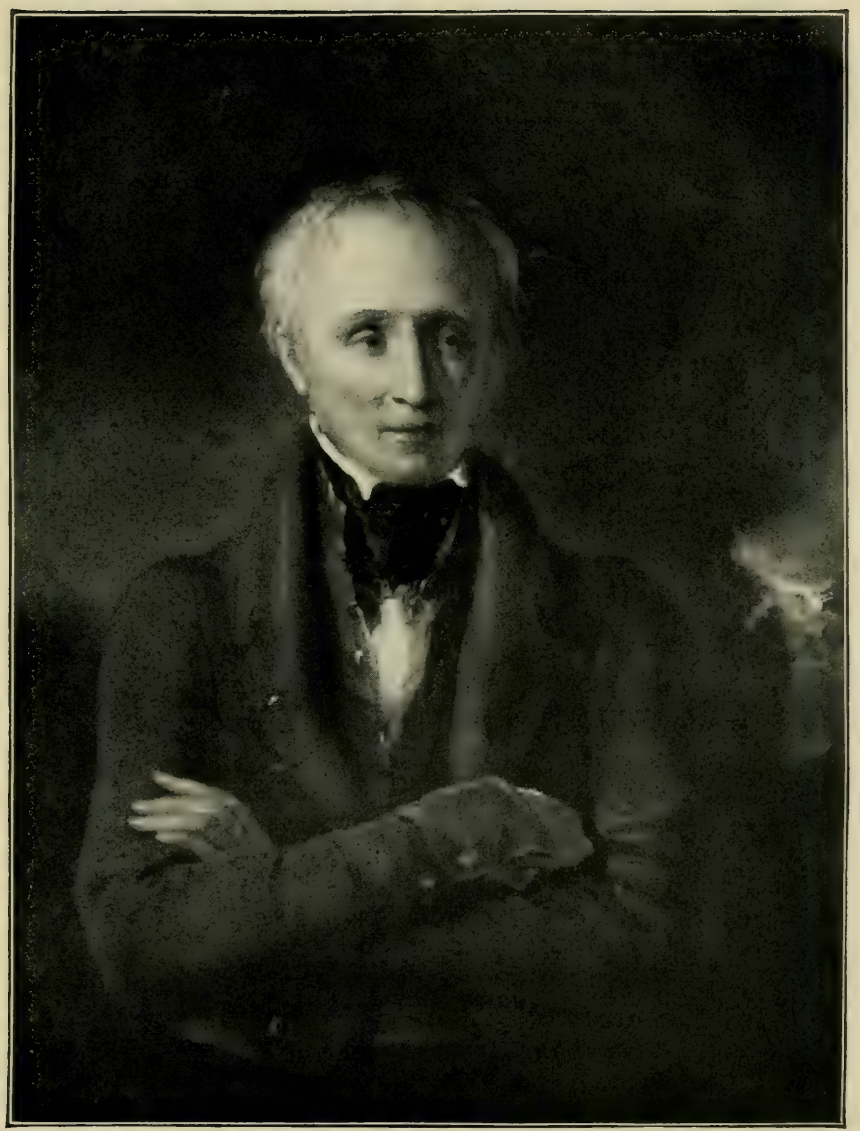
"My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief,
Are mine alone!"

Life had lost its charm; and all he sought was a martial death in that land of ancient heroes: —

"Seek out, less often sought than found,
A soldier's grave — for thee the best;
Then look around, and choose thy ground,
And take thy rest."

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH.

In striking contrast with the restless, passionate life of Byron stands the peaceful, uneventful life of Wordsworth. Instead of furious, tormenting passions, there is a self-poised, peaceful life of contemplation. Byron imparted to the beautiful or sublime scenes of nature the colorings of his turbulent thoughts and violent emotions; Wordsworth brought to mountain, stream, and flower the docility of a reverent and loving spirit. His soul was open to the lessons of the outward world, which to him was pervaded by an invisible presence. In his pride and misanthropy, Byron felt no sympathy with the sufferings and struggles of humanity. His censorious eye perceived only the foibles and frailties that lie on the surface. With a far nobler spirit and a keener insight, Wordsworth discerned beauty and grandeur in human life and aspired to be helpful to his fellow-men. "It is indeed a deep satisfaction," he wrote near the close of his life, "to hope and believe that my poetry will be, while it lasts, a help to the cause of virtue and truth, especially among the young." While Byron trampled on the laws of morality, ruined his home and turned the joys of life to ashes, Wordsworth lived in the midst of quiet domestic happiness — humble indeed, but glorified by fidelity, friendship, and love. Byron died in early manhood enslaved by evil habits and



Engraved by J. Bombey after the painting by W. Boxall, London. Published 1832.

Wm Wordsworth

oppressed with the emptiness of life; Wordsworth reached an honored old age, and passed away upheld with precious hopes. The one may be admired for his power and meteoric splendor; the other will be honored and loved for his upright character, his human sympathy, and his helpful teachings.

William Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth in Cumberland County, April 7, 1770, of an ancient family. His violent and moody temper as a child filled his mother with anxiety about his future. He in no way distinguished himself at school, though some of the verses he then composed were well spoken of.

At the age of seventeen he entered Cambridge, where he gave no promise of his future greatness. His genius developed slowly. It was not from books, but from nature, that he derived the greatest inspiration and help. The celebrated Lake District, in which he was born and in which his school-days and the greater part of his maturity were spent, is a region of varied and beautiful scenery. With its mountains, forests, and lakes, it is grander than the typical English landscape, yet without the overpowering sublimity of Switzerland. It was a region specially suited to awaken and develop the peculiar powers of Wordsworth. He moved among the natural beauties of the country with an ill-defined but exquisite pleasure. In his own words: —

> "The ever-living universe,
> Turn where I might, was opening out its glories;
> And the independent spirit of pure youth
> Called forth at every season new delights,
> Spread round my steps like sunshine o'er green fields."

In 1791 Wordsworth took the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and left the university without having decided upon a vocation. "He did not feel himself good enough for the church," he said years afterward; "he felt that his mind was not properly disciplined for that holy office, and that the struggle between his conscience and his impulses would have made life a torture." He was disinclined to the law; and though he fancied that he had talents for the profession of arms, he feared that he might fall a prey to disease in foreign lands. He passed some time in London without a definite aim and also without much profit. He felt out of place amidst the rush and din of the city. Like the "Farmer of Tilsbury Vale," whom he afterward described: —

> "In the throng of the town like a stranger is he,
> Like one whose own country's far over the sea;
> And nature, while through the great city he hies,
> Full ten times a day takes his heart by surprise."

After a few months he went to France for the purpose of learning the language. His sympathies, which had been with the revolutionists, were intensified by an acquaintance at Orleans with the republican general Beaupuis. Returning to Paris, Wordsworth contemplated placing himself at the head of the Girondist party — a step that would inevitably have brought him to the guillotine. From this danger he was saved by his friends, who, not in sympathy with his republicanism, stopped his allowance, and thus compelled him to return to England. The excesses into which the Revolution ran were a rude shock to him. He was driven to the verge of scepticism: —

"Even the visible universe
Fell under the dominion of a taste
Less spiritual, with microscopic view
Was scanned, as I had scanned the moral world."

But his thoughtful nature could not rest in unbelief. A sympathetic study of nature, the beautiful devotion of his sister Dorothy, and a deeper insight into the lives of men, restored his healthfulness and peace of mind. As he advanced in years, he gave up the ardent republican hopes of his youth, and settled down into a staid conservatism.

There are few lives that might better serve to illustrate the doctrine of a special providence. All through his career, the needed help came to him at the right moment. Wordsworth had nursed with tender care a young man attacked by consumption. Upon his death it was found that he had left the poet a legacy of nine hundred pounds. Nothing could have come more opportunely. With this small sum Wordsworth settled with his sister in a little cottage at Racedown in Dorsetshire. Here be began to devote himself to poetry in earnest. In his sister he found a congenial and helpful companion. She filled his home with sunshine. Her poetic sensibilities were keenly alive to the beauties of nature. In grateful recognition of her helpfulness, the poet says : —

"She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
And humble cares, and delicate fears;
A heart the fountain of sweet tears;
And love, and thought, and joy."

With a beautiful devotion she found her life-work in aiding her gifted brother to fulfil his mission.

The first volume of Wordsworth is entitled "Lyrical

Ballads." It was published in 1798, and contained, besides Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," and several pieces that were ridiculed for triviality, "We Are Seven," "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," and above all "Tintern Abbey," all of which contain the essential principles of Wordsworth's poetry. Indeed, the "Tintern Abbey" more than any other single poem contains the revelation that the poet had to make to the world. The following passage, besides presenting the poet's view of nature, is one of great beauty: —

"And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."

Unfortunately the trivial pieces attracted most attention, and the work was received with coldness and ridicule. "The Idiot Boy" — a delightful poem to those who can feel the pathos of childish imbecility and the beauty of maternal love and solicitude — was the subject of one of the cruelest passages in the "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers." Speaking of Wordsworth, whom he denominates "a mild apostate from poetic rule," Byron continues: —

"Thus when he tells the tale of Betty Foy,
The idiot mother of an idiot boy,
A moon-struck silly lad who lost his way,
And like his bard confounded night with day,

So close on each pathetic part he dwells,
And each adventure so sublimely tells,
That all who view the idiot in his glory,
Conceive the bard the hero of the story."

Immediately after the publication of the "Lyrical Ballads" Wordsworth and his sister went to Germany in order to improve their imperfect acquaintance with the German language. They passed the winter at Goslar; but as they seem to have made no acquaintances, their means of advancement was confined to reading German books privately.

The winter was severe, and their comforts were few. Wordsworth says: "I slept in a room over a passage that was not ceiled. The people of the house used to say, rather unfeelingly, that they expected that I should be frozen to death some night." Notwithstanding these discomforts, his muse was active, and he produced some of his most charming and characteristic pieces, among which are "Lucy Gray," "Ruth," "Nutting," and the "Poet's Epitaph." It was here, too, that "The Prelude," the poetical autobiography of the author's mental growth, was begun. "'The Prelude,'" says a biographer, "is a book of good augury for human nature. We feel in reading it as if the stock of mankind were sound. The soul seems going on from strength to strength by the mere development of her inborn power."

"The Prelude" throws much light on Wordsworth's intellectual development and his poetic characteristics. It shows us that from childhood nature had a peculiar fascination for him. Its varied scenes of beauty, majesty, and power left a deep impression on his sensitive nature. At the age of ten, he tells us: —

"Even then
I held unconscious intercourse with beauty
Old as creation, drinking in a pure
Organic pleasure from the silver wreaths
Of curling mist, or from the level plain
Of waters colored by impending clouds."

But, at the same time, the beautiful pastoral life he beheld among his native hills and dales taught him to love man also: —

"Thus was man
Ennobled outwardly before my sight,
And thus my heart was early introduced
To an unconscious love and reverence
Of human nature; hence the human form
To me became the index of delight,
Of grace and honor, power and worthiness."

Wordsworth returned to England in 1799 and settled at Grasmere in the Lake District, in which he spent the rest of his life. The following year he published a new edition of the "Lyrical Ballads," containing many new pieces and the famous preface in which he laid down his poetical canons. These canons may be briefly stated as follows: 1. Subjects are to be taken from rustic or common life, "because in that condition the essential passions of the heart find a better soil in which they can attain their maturity, are less under restraint, and speak plainer and more emphatic language." 2. The language of common life, purified from its defects, is to be adopted, because men of that station "hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived; and because, . . . being less under the action of social vanity, they convey their feelings and notions in simple



THE POET'S SEAT, RYDAL WATER, AND LOUGHRIGG FELLS.

One of Wordsworth's Favorite Haunts.

Where through the delight of its pleasantness,
Sitting down one hardly wills to rise again,
The feeling of unworldliness grows doubly strong.

and unelaborated expressions." 3. "There neither is nor can be any essential difference between the language of prose and metrical composition."

The most, perhaps, that can be said in favor of these principles is that, without being absolutely true, they contain elements of truth. Like Burns, Wordsworth has conferred a blessing on humanity in pointing out the beauty of commonplace objects and incidents. We cannot spare "We Are Seven," or "Michael," which ought to be one of our most popular poems. His naturalness of diction is to be commended. Yet it must be said that Wordsworth sometimes carries his principles to a ridiculous extent. When he hits upon phrases like "dear brother Jim," and objects like "skimmed milk" and —

> "A household tub, like one of those
> Which women use to wash their clothes,"

his greatest admirers are forced to grieve.

Wordsworth's life in the Lake District was characterized by great simplicity. There were no stirring events, no great changes. His resources were increased by the payment of an old debt due his father's estate. His marriage, in 1802, to Miss Mary Hutchinson, brought into his home a real helpmate. Though decidedly domestic in her turn, she was not without poetic feeling and appreciated her husband's genius. The poet paid her this glowing tribute: —

> "A being breathing thoughtful breath,
> A traveller between life and death;
> The reason firm, the temperate will,
> Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;

A perfect woman nobly planned,
To warn, to comfort, and command;
And yet a spirit still, and bright
With something of angelic light."

With true feminine tact she presided over the poet's home, and softened as far as possible the unconscious egotism into which his retirement and contemplation had betrayed him. Dorothy Wordsworth shared their home. The life of this happy family was an illustration of "plain living and high thinking." Much time was spent in the open air, and every foot of ground in the neighborhood was traversed by the poet and his sister. A large part of his verse was composed during these daily rambles. While extending a cordial welcome to congenial friends, — De Quincey, Coleridge, Wilson, Southey, and others, — he cared little for neighborhood gossip. To him it was a fruitless waste of time. As he tells us in the sonnets entitled "Personal Talk": —

"Better than such discourse doth silence long,
Long, barren silence, square with my desire;
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,
And listen to the flapping of the flame,
Or kettle whispering its faint undersong."

This quiet, humble, reflective life is beautiful; yet it has its objectionable features. It leads to narrow and one-sided views of life. It is not the way in which to develop a strong or heroic character. Yet it was adapted to Wordsworth's genius and produced a rich fruitage.

The first great sorrow that came into the poet's life was the death of his brother John, captain of an East Indiaman.



THE POET'S SEAT, RYDAL WATER, AND LOUGHRIGG FELLS.

One of Wordsworth's Favorite Haunts.

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Sitting down one hardly wills to rise again,
The feeling of unworldliness grows doubly strong.

His vessel was wrecked in 1805 and sank with the captain at his post of duty. He had several years previously spent a few months at Grasmere, and was looking forward to the time when he might settle there for life.

A strong attachment existed between him and his brother. It was but natural, therefore, that the poet should write: "For myself, I feel that there is something cut out of my life which cannot be restored. I never thought of him but with hope and delight. We looked forward to the time, not distant, as we thought, when he would settle near us — when the task of his life would be over, and he would have nothing to do but reap his reward. . . . I never wrote a line without the thought of giving him pleasure; my writings, printed and manuscript, were his delight, and one of the chief solaces of his long voyages." The same year saw the death of Nelson at Trafalgar. The death of the hero brought grief to the national heart. Combining the traits of his brother John and Admiral Nelson, Wordsworth composed "The Happy Warrior," a poem of great dignity and weight — a veritable manual of greatness. Who is the happy warrior? He who owes, —

> "To virtue every triumph that he knows;
> Who, if he rise to station of command,
> Rises by open means; and there will stand
> On honorable terms, or else retire,
> And in himself possess his own desire;
> Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
> Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim;
> And therefore does not stoop nor lie in wait
> For wealth, or honors, or for worldly state;
> Whom they must follow, on whose head must fall,
> Like showers of manna, if they come at all."

Every year increased the number of notable poems. There are two or three that deserve especial mention as embodying peculiar views — to some extent Wordsworth's philosophy of life. In a little poem called "The Rainbow," he says: —

"My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky:
So was it when my life began;
So is it now I am a man;
So be it when I shall grow old,
Or let me die!
The child is father of the man;
And I could wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety."

Far more is here expressed than appears at first reading. "Wordsworth holds," to adopt the excellent interpretation by Myers, "that the instincts and pleasures of a healthy childhood sufficiently indicate the lines on which our maturer character should be formed. The joy which began in the mere sense of existence should be maintained by hopeful faith; the simplicity which began in inexperience should be recovered by meditation; the love which originated in the family circle should expand itself over the race of men." In the "Ode to Duty," one of Wordsworth's noblest productions, we meet with this "genial sense of youth": —

"Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security."

In the "Ode on Immortality," in which we have perhaps the highest attainment of poetry in this century, he

makes use of the Platonic doctrine of the preëxistence of the soul to account for the glory that hovers over the visible world in childhood. As a child looks upon the various objects of earth and sky, he unconsciously invests them, the poet says, with the splendor of the spiritual world from which he has come. But as life advances, these recollections of a previous existence become fainter and fainter, and at last the world degenerates into a commonplace reality. Now read these splendid lines: —

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar:
Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light and whence it flows,
He sees it in his joy;
The youth, who daily further from the east
Must travel, still is nature's priest,
And by the vision splendid
Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day."

In 1813 Wordsworth removed to Rydal Mount, where he spent the rest of his life. With increasing family — three sons and two daughters had been born unto him — came increasing wants and expenditures. His good for-

tune did not desert him. He was appointed distributer of stamps for the county of Westmoreland — an office that brought him little labor, but five hundred pounds a year.

The following year he published "The Excursion," a tedious and prosaic poem relieved here and there with passages of surpassing beauty. It was coldly received, and proved a financial loss. Jeffrey began a famous review with the contemptuous sentence, "This will never do." Up to this time Wordsworth had been the subject of continuously unfavorable criticism. No other writer, perhaps, ever had so protracted a struggle to gain a proper recognition.

But through all this long period of misrepresentation and detraction, Wordsworth did not lose confidence in himself. His genius was its own sufficient witness. He felt a pity for the ignorance of the world, but looked forward to a time when the merits of his poetry would be recognized. Writing to a friend, he says: "Let me confine myself to my object, which is to make you, my dear friend, as easy hearted as myself with respect to these poems. Trouble not yourself upon their present reception. Of what moment is that compared with what I trust is their destiny? — to console the afflicted; to add sunshine to daylight, by making the happy happier; to teach the young and the gracious of every age to see, to think and feel, and therefore to become more actively and securely virtuous; this is their office, which I trust they will faithfully perform long after we (that is, all that is mortal of us) are mouldered in our graves." What in many a man would savor of egotism comes from the lips of Wordsworth with the calm dignity of conscious strength.

His hopes were not disappointed. The latter years of his life brought him great popularity and honor. In 1839 the University of Oxford conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Civil Law; three years later the government granted him a pension of three hundred pounds; and upon the death of Southey he became poet laureate. His pure and peaceful life came to an end April 23, 1850. "And surely of him, if of any one, we may think as of a man who was so in accord with nature, so at one with the very soul of things, that there can be no mansion of the universe which shall not be to him a home, no Governor who will not accept him among his servants, and satisfy him with love and peace."

Wordsworth's mind was evenly balanced; thought, imagination, and conscience all worked together in harmony. This fact gave sanity not only to his life, but also to his poetry. His was not, as some persons have supposed, a mild, gentle nature without energy. He had a strong will and deep feelings; but through stern self-discipline, he had brought them under rational control. The power of his intellectual and emotional nature is shown in numberless passages, in which he reaches the sublimest heights of poetry — regions far beyond the attainment of any but mighty spirits. There is much that is commonplace in his poetry — great tracts of dulness; but in his moments of fully aroused imaginative energy, he is unsurpassed, perhaps, by any other English poet except Shakespeare.

Like other lovers of nature, Wordsworth had a keen eye and ear for its beauties. His observations are minute and accurate. Forms, colors, sounds, are all vividly caught and reproduced in his poetry. To take but a single illus-

tration, we read in "A Night-Piece," dating from 1798, the following: —

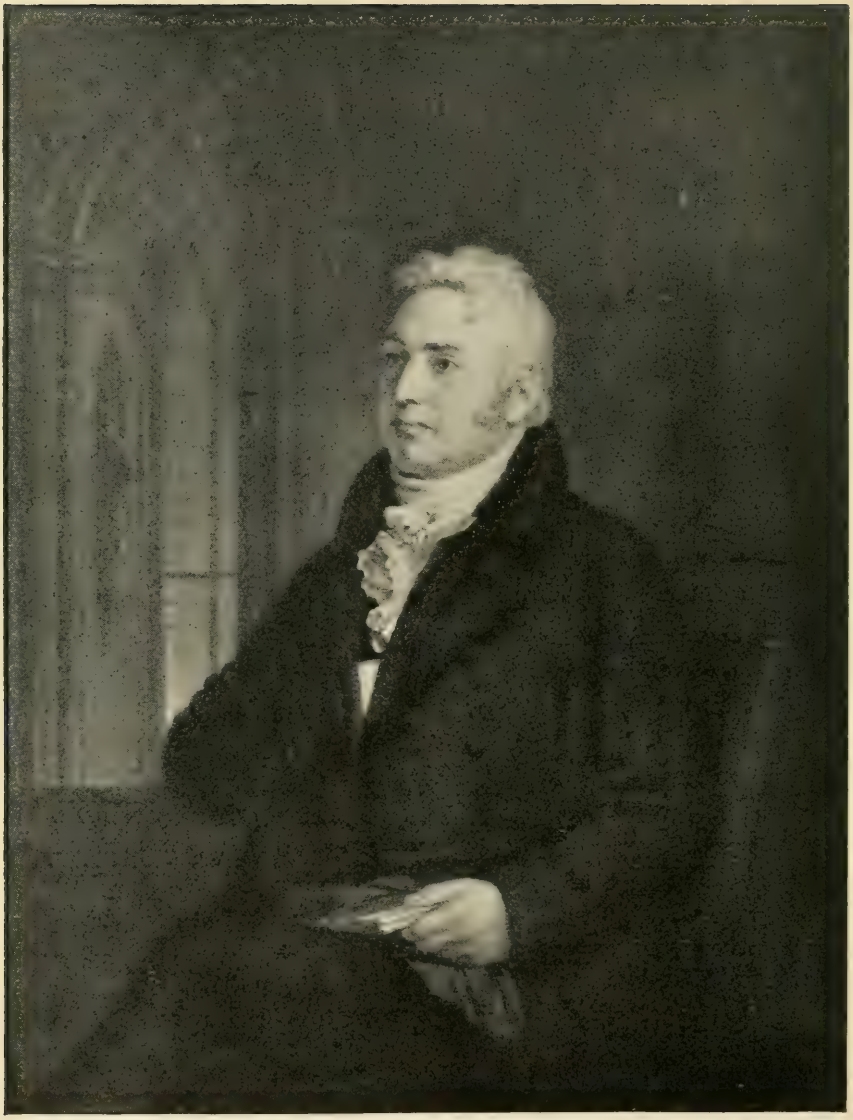
"The traveller looks up — the clouds are split
Asunder, — and above his head he sees
The clear moon, and the glory of the heavens.
There, in a black-blue vault she sails along,
Followed by multitudes of stars, that, small
And sharp, and bright, along the dark abyss
Drive as she drives; how fast they wheel away,
Yet vanish not! — the wind is in the tree,
But they are silent; — still they roll along
Immeasurably distant; and the vault
Built round by those white clouds, enormous clouds."

But Wordsworth was more than a mere observer. He was not satisfied to report the outward appearance of things, as were Scott and, in a large measure, Byron. He looked upon nature as interpenetrated by a divine, conscious spirit that could speak to his soul. Beneath the outward beauties of the world he tried to catch its spiritual message. To him nature was a great teacher, surpassing the storehouses of human wisdom: —

"Books! 'tis a dull and endless strife;
Come, hear the woodland linnet,
How sweet his music! on my life,
There's more of wisdom in it.

"And hark! how blithe the throstle sings!
He, too, is no mean preacher:
Come forth into the light of things,
Let Nature be your teacher.

"One impulse from a vernal wood
May teach you more of man,
Of moral evil and of good,
Than all the sages can."



Aged 42. Engraved by Samuel Cousins, A.R.A., after the painting by Washington Allston, from the original picture in possession of George L. Barnard, Esq., London. Published 1854.

S. T. Coleridge

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

THE influence of Coleridge was surprising. Though his works are singularly fragmentary, he stands out as a prominent figure among his great contemporaries. His influence seems due chiefly to his originality, his magnetic personal presence, and the stimulating quality of his intellectual activity. He invented new forms of poetry, to which Scott acknowledged himself indebted; and he introduced German metaphysics, which was not without effect on Wordsworth and many subsequent writers. His strong, restless intellect, while deficient in executive power, was constantly blazing new paths for others. He possessed, in extraordinary degree, the mental endowment which we denominate genius.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge was born in Devonshire, Oct. 21, 1772, the youngest of a family of ten children. His mother, though a woman of strong sense, was not without her prejudices. She bade her sons beware of what she called "harpsichord ladies." His father was vicar of Ottery St. Mary and head-master of the free grammar school there. He was a scholar of some attainments and prepared a Latin grammar, in which he proposed to clear up the obscurities of the accusative by calling it the "quale-quare-quidditive case." He was accustomed to edify his congregation by quotations from the Hebrew, which he commended to their attention as "the immediate

language of the Holy Ghost." "The image of my father," Coleridge wrote years afterward, "my revered, kind, simple-hearted father, is a religion to me."

Coleridge was educated at home until he was eight years old. His imaginative and meditative temper led observers to regard him as a remarkable child and to predict for him no ordinary career. At the age of ten he was entered at Christ's Hospital, where poetry, metaphysics, and theology engrossed his attention. "At a very premature age, even before my fifteenth year," he tells us in the "Biographia Literaria," "I had bewildered myself in metaphysics and in theological controversy. Nothing else pleased me. History and particularly facts lost all interest in my mind. Poetry (though for a schoolboy of that age I was above par in English versification, and had already produced two or three compositions which I may venture to say were somewhat above mediocrity, and which had gained me more credit than the sound good sense of my old master was at all pleased with) — poetry itself, yea, novels and romances, became insipid to me."

It is to this period that Lamb's well-known description in the "Essays of Elia" belongs. "Come back into memory," he exclaims, "like as thou wast in the dayspring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee — the dark pillar not yet turned — Samuel Taylor Coleridge, logician, metaphysician, bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Iamblichus or Plotinus (for even in those years

thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Gray Friars reëchoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy!*"

Under the master, the Rev. James Bowyer, a man of severe taste, he received a careful training in composition and literary criticism. No mercy was shown to any phrase or metaphor that would not stand the test of sound sense. Harp, lyre, muse, Pegasus, Parnassus, — words so dear to many a schoolboy, — were severely dealt with. "In fancy," says Coleridge as he writes his literary memoirs, "I can almost hear him now, exclaiming 'Harp? Harp? Lyre? Pen and ink, boy, you mean! Muse, boy, Muse? Your nurse's daughter, you mean! Pierian spring? Oh, aye! the cloister-pump, I suppose!'" The young student was taught to prefer Demosthenes to Cicero, Homer to Virgil, and Virgil to Ovid. His attention was called to the exquisite skill with which the great poets select and arrange their words.

In 1792 he entered Jesus College, Cambridge. The records of his college life are meagre. Within a few months of his entrance he won a gold medal for a Greek ode on the slave-trade — a poem of which he himself afterward said that "the ideas were better than the language or metre in which they were conveyed." His reading was extensive and miscellaneous. He took a keen interest in the political movements of the day, and with his leisurely habits and splendid conversational gifts naturally drew a crowd of admirers around him. According to the account of a fellow-student, "He was ready at any time to unbend his mind in conversation, and for the

sake of this his room was a constant rendezvous of conversation-loving friends."

In the latter part of 1793 Coleridge suddenly left Cambridge and going to London enlisted in the Light Dragoons. The cause of this singular escapade, whether disappointment in love or despondency over debts, has not been made plain. He was utterly unsuited to military service. Apart from constitutional awkwardness, he sadly lacked physical energy — a lack that manifested itself particularly in a strong repugnance to caring for his horse. Finally, a striking Latin sentence which he wrote on the stable wall attracted attention to his scholarly attainments, and after four months of service influential friends obtained his discharge. He returned to the university, but left it in a few months without taking his degree.

In 1794 Coleridge visited Oxford, where he met Southey. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. The young men were drawn together by their poetic gifts and political sympathies. Coleridge communicated his newly formed scheme to found a socialistic community on the banks of the Susquehanna — a scheme to which he had given the novel and descriptive name of Pantisocracy. All property was to be held in common; each member was to work for the good of the entire community; and all were to have an equal share in administering the government. Southey greeted the Utopian scheme with enthusiasm. Disappointed by the cruel excesses of the French Revolution, from which both young men had expected a new and better social order, they wished to show their faith in a pure democracy, and with this pantisocratic community to mark the beginning of a happier age. But there was one

difficulty in the way of these hopeful young men. That was money. And when after a year's effort the requisite means were not forthcoming, the splendid scheme was reluctantly abandoned.

But it had not been without at least one important result for Coleridge. One of the requirements of the pantisocratic scheme was that each member should take unto himself a gentle, loving woman as his wife. To this requirement Coleridge had responded with more than his usual promptness. In 1795 he married Miss Sarah Fricker, sister to Southey's betrothed, and at last added another to the unfortunate list of unhappy marriages in the history of English men of letters. After a few years his transcendental moods refused to submit to the yoke of commonplace domestic duties. His wife was perhaps lacking in appreciation and sympathy; but his dreamy, shiftless ways, which often left the family without bread, imposed no ordinary strain on her patience. Unable to provide for his family, Coleridge finally left them dependent on Southey, while he himself led an unsettled, precarious life among various friends.

In 1796 Coleridge may be said to have begun his editorial career with the publication of *The Watchman*, a periodical appearing every eight days and devoted to "truth and freedom." The editor himself made a tour of northern England for subscribers, and in the "Biographia Literaria" has left us a humorous and delightful account of his experiences. At Birmingham he was introduced to a tallow-chandler, upon whom he exhausted all the marvellous resources of his brain and tongue. "I argued," he says, "I described, I promised, I prophesied; and begin-

ning with the captivity of nations, I ended with the near approach of the millennium." But it was all in vain. The hard man of the world refused to be persuaded and finally brought the interview to an abrupt termination. "I am as great a one," he said, "as any man in Brummagem, sir, for liberty and truth and all them sort of things, but as to this,—no offence I hope, sir,—I must beg to be excused." Coleridge had no talent for business; and as a writer, in the interests of "liberty and truth," he showed a sublime disregard for the opinions and prejudices of his patrons. As a natural result, *The Watchman*, after a career more valiant than wise, suspended publication at the end of two months. More than a dozen years later he established another weekly called *The Friend*, which, as might be supposed, had likewise only a brief existence.

In 1797 Coleridge published at Bristol his first volume of poetry. A second edition, enlarged and revised, appeared the following year. Though this volume met with an encouraging reception, it was still criticised for its general turgidity of style. The poet recognized the justice of this criticism and frankly confessed that in the second edition he used his "best efforts to tame the swell and glitter both of thought and diction." He wrote from the necessity of an inner impulse and expected neither profit nor fame. "Poetry has been to me," he says, "its own 'exceeding great reward'; it has soothed my affliction; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me."

The poems in this volume, which hardly contains any-

thing preëminent, reveal to us something of the power and spirit of Coleridge. He is master of lofty thought, fervid feeling, and splendid expression. Many of the poems, juvenile in character, do not rise above the commonplace; but the best of them move on a lofty plane and have a deep, majestic music. Sincere in thought and purpose, they give us glimpses into the poet's life and reveal to us his political convictions and religious beliefs. In the "Æolian Harp" he shows us something of the transcendental spirit, which is frequently met with in his poetry: —

> "And what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic harps diversely framed,
> That tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps,
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the soul of each, and God of all?"

After his marriage Coleridge retired to Clevedon on the Bristol Channel, where he spent a protracted honeymoon. In his "Reflections on Leaving a Place of Retirement" he has given us a description of the pretty cottage he occupied there, in which he passed what were probably the happiest months of his life: —

> "Low was our pretty cot! our tallest rose
> Peeped at the chamber-window. We could hear
> At silent noon, and eve, and early morn,
> The sea's faint murmur. In the open air
> Our myrtles blossomed; and across the porch
> Thick jasmines twined; the little landscape round
> Was green and woody, and refreshed the eye."

"Religious Musings" is a majestic poem on religion and politics. "The Destiny of Nations," besides some

eloquent passages, contains a noteworthy definition of freedom: —

> "For what is freedom, but the unfettered use
> Of all the powers which God for use had given?"

In the "Ode to France," which Shelley pronounced the finest in the English language, the poet tells, with great fervor of emotion, —

> "With what deep worship he has still adored
> The spirit of divinest Liberty."

In 1797 Coleridge removed to Nether Stowey in Somersetshire, where he occupied a house placed at his disposal by an admiring friend. Here he lived on terms of intimacy with Wordsworth, whom he had met a year or two previously. In spite of his self-complacency, Coleridge said that he felt himself as "nothing in comparison with Wordsworth." And Wordsworth, who was far from flattering his contemporaries, declared that Coleridge was "the only wonderful man he had ever known." Without a thought of literary jealousy, the two poets worked together in beautiful fellowship, seeking each other's counsel and stimulating each other's activity.

In his poem "To William Wordsworth" Coleridge pays a beautiful tribute to the preëminent gifts of his friend. The poem was written on the night after Wordsworth had recited some verses on the growth of an individual mind in "The Prelude": —

> "O great Bard!
> Ere yet that last strain dying awed the air,
> With steadfast eye I viewed thee in the choir
> Of ever-enduring men. The truly great

Have all one age, and from one visible space
Shed influence! They, both in power and act,
Are permanent, and Time is not with them,
Save as it worketh for them, they in it."

The poems of this period exhibit clearly, especially in their deeper sympathy with nature, the influence of Wordsworth. Thus, in "The Nightingale," written in 1798, Coleridge says that there is nothing melancholy in nature, and that the sorrowing poet, who wronged philomel by calling its song sad, —

"Had better far have stretched his limbs
Beside a brook in mossy forest-dell,
By sun or moon-light, to the influxes
Of shapes and sounds and shifting elements
Surrendering his whole spirit, of his song
And of his fame forgetful! so his fame
Should share in Nature's immortality,
A venerable thing! and so his song
Should make all Nature lovelier, and itself
Be loved like Nature."

For Coleridge the most important poetic result of this association with Wordsworth was the composition of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The poem appeared in the "Lyrical Ballads" prepared jointly by the two poets in 1798. This volume was written to illustrate two points, namely, "the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colors of the imagination." In carrying out these principles, it was agreed that Coleridge should treat of persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic. Wordsworth, on

the other hand, was to give the charm of novelty to commonplace things and direct attention to the loveliness and wonders of the world about us. Both did their work marvellously well and produced an epoch-making book. "I found in these poems," says De Quincey, "the ray of a new morning, and an absolute revelation of untrodden worlds, teeming with power and beauty, as yet unsuspected among men."

In conformity with the guiding principle he had adopted, Coleridge wrote the "Ancient Mariner," in which he lends, in a wonderful degree, the force of reality to what is purely imaginary. It is wholly unlike anything else he ever wrote. It is remarkable for its strong ballad style, for its vivid descriptions, and for its rounded completeness of form. Of its kind there is, perhaps, nothing better in our language. The lesson of the poem, though it was not written for its moral, is contained in the parting words of the dreadful mariner: —

"Farewell, farewell! but this I tell
To thee, thou wedding-guest!
He prayeth well who loveth well
Both man and bird and beast.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

Another piece appearing in the "Lyrical Ballads" is "Love," the sweetest of all Coleridge's poems. It is distinguished for its soft, fascinating melody — a quality for which the author especially prized it. The opening stanza is often quoted: —

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
All are but ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame."

"Christabel," originally intended for the "Lyrical Ballads," but not published till several years later, was written according to the poetic principle that had produced the "Ancient Mariner." Unfortunately it was never completed. Of the two parts we have, one was written in 1797 and the other in 1800. The metre is founded on a new principle, "namely, that of counting in each line the accents, not the syllables. Though the latter may vary from seven to twelve, yet in each line the accents will be found to be only four." The characters of Christabel, Sir Leoline, and the sorceress Geraldine are a little shadowy; but when read and reread, the poem is seen to possess astonishing power — the noblest *torso* in English literature. It contains a remarkable passage, which the poet regarded as the best he ever wrote: —

"Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth.

* * * * * *

"They parted ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining —
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been."

In 1798, impelled perhaps by the lack of means, Coleridge thought of becoming a Unitarian preacher and of abandoning literature forever. Hazlitt has given an enthusiastic description of one of his sermons, in which "poetry and philosophy, truth and genius, had embraced, under the eye and with the sanction of religion." But an annuity of one hundred and fifty pounds bestowed upon him by the Wedgwood brothers, who admired his genius, saved him for literature. In September, in company with Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy, Coleridge went to Germany, where he devoted himself assiduously first to the language and afterward to metaphysics and theology.

In "Satyrane's Letters" he has given an account of his experiences, and exhibited a larger sense of humor than is to be found elsewhere in his writings. It was during this sojourn abroad that he wrote the sublime "Hymn before Sunrise," inspired by the awful grandeur of Mont Blanc.

He returned to England at the end of fourteen months; and as the first fruit of his visit to Germany he translated Schiller's "Wallenstein," which was printed in 1800. The translation is admirably made, improving, some maintain, on the original; but it was not till some years later, when Coleridge's fame was well established, that its excellence was fully recognized. This same year he took charge of the literary and political department of the *Morning Post*. His princely gifts were speedily recognized, and the proprietor offered him a half-interest in the newspaper business, which would have brought him, as he estimated, about two thousand pounds a year. "But I told him," says Coleridge in a characteristic passage, "that I would



GRETA HALL.

Here Coleridge live for several years with Southey.

There, while the one was shaving,
Would he the song begin ;
And the other, when he heard it at breakfast,
In ready accord join in.

not give up the country and the lazy reading of old folios for two thousand times two hundred pounds — in short, that beyond three hundred and fifty pounds a year I considered money a real evil."

The year "Wallenstein" was published, Coleridge removed to the Lake District in the north of England, made famous by the residence also of Wordsworth and Southey. To these three poets, who have something in common *in style*, has been given the name of Lake School. At this period the mind and character of Coleridge underwent a serious and baleful change. About a year after his settling at Keswick, his health became seriously impaired; and seeking relief from acute pain, he resorted to the use of opiates. He found physical relief for a time, but at length discovered that he was held in a terrible bondage. His will became more enfeebled and vacillating; and, worst of all, his imagination lost its imperial sweep and power. His "Ode to Dejection," written in the spring of 1802, possesses a deep biographic interest:—

> "But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
> Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth,
> But oh! each visitation
> Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
> My shaping spirit of Imagination."

In 1804 Coleridge sailed for Malta, where for a time he acted as secretary to the governor of the island, Sir Alexander Bell. The drudgery of his office, and the regular habits it enforced, at length became intolerable. He went to Rome, where he interested himself in the treasures of art, and after an absence of two years and a half he

returned to England. The opium habit, which had gained a deeper hold on him, rendered his life for the next ten years almost indescribably wretched. His poetic faculty had passed away, and in prose he was unequal to any serious task. Southey shed tears over the wreck of his genius. Only his colloquial powers still retained something of their former splendor. "He talked very much like an angel," Lord Egmont said, "and did nothing at all."

During the period under consideration Coleridge delivered several courses of lectures in London and Bristol. His first series, delivered in 1808, was a course on Poetry and the Fine Arts, for which the Royal Institution agreed to pay him one hundred guineas. His reputation at first attracted large audiences of distinguished people. But he had become, to use a word of his own coinage, wholly *unreliable*. In spite of his honorable intentions, no dependence could be placed in any appointments he made. He frequently disappointed his audiences; and when he did appear, he sadly failed to meet expectations. His vast powers of extemporaneous discourse had deserted him. But a few years later, when he had somewhat recovered his natural tone of body and mind, his old-time fervor and power returned. "His words seemed to flow," it was said, "as from a person repeating with grace and energy some delightful poem." His lectures on Shakespeare, the substance of which has been preserved, give him a foremost place among Shakespeare's critics.

In 1813 his play "Remorse," which had been written years before, was accepted, upon Byron's recommendation, by Drury Lane Theatre. The scene is laid in Spain

at the time of the Inquisition under Philip II. The piece is not without striking passages and had a brilliant success, running for twenty nights. It brought Coleridge three times as much as all his other literary productions put together — a most welcome boon at a time of pressing necessity. A second drama, "Zapolya," written at the suggestion of Byron, was destined never to see the footlights, but on its publication in 1817 it became so popular that two thousand copies were sold in six weeks.

With the year 1816 there came a change for the better. Realizing his inability to break the bonds of his terrible slavery, Coleridge placed himself under the care of Mr. Gillman, a surgeon of Highgate, London. No wiser or kinder guardian could have been chosen. For the rest of his life Coleridge remained an inmate of this hospitable home, and succeeded, in large measure, in breaking away from the thraldom of his fatal habit. With returning health something of his former power came back. His most important prose works belong to this period. "The Statesman's Manual" appeared in 1816, and the year following he published the "Biographia Literaria, or Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions," one of the most interesting of his many works.

The life of Coleridge has been divided into three periods, according to the prevailing character of his intellectual activity. The first, extending to the year 1798, has been called the *poetic period;* the second, extending to the year 1818, the *critical period;* and the third, extending to his death in 1834, the *theological period.* During this last period the prevailing interest of his life was metaphysics and theology. In philosophy he was a transcendentalist.

He was a profound student of the German metaphysicians, particularly of Kant, Schelling, and Hegel, whose teachings he was the first to naturalize in England. In large measure he adopted the philosophical system of Kant, and insisted particularly on the great German's distinction between the *reason* and the *understanding*. In 1825 he published his "Aids to Reflection," the purpose of which was to show that the "Christian faith is the perfection of human intelligence." It is regarded by many as his ablest work.

There was a wonderful magnetism about Coleridge's personality. He gathered about him a circle of disciples, who revered him as a prophet. His conversation exerted a fascinating power, even when by reason of its depth or transcendentalism it was not clearly understood. No more wonderful talker has appeared since the days of Johnson. His "Table Talk," preserved by his nephew, gives an idea of the acuteness and variety of his observation, though not of his inspired impressiveness. "Throughout a long-drawn summer's day," says Henry Nelson Coleridge, "would this man talk to you in low, equable, but clear and musical tones, concerning things human and divine; marshalling all history, harmonizing all experiment, probing the depths of your consciousness, and revealing visions of glory and of terror to the imagination; but pouring withal such floods of light upon the mind that you might, for a season, like Paul, become blind in the very act of conversion." [1]

Coleridge calmly passed away July 25, 1834. In spite of his many defects of character and life, his aims were

[1] See Carlyle's sketch in the "Life of Sterling."

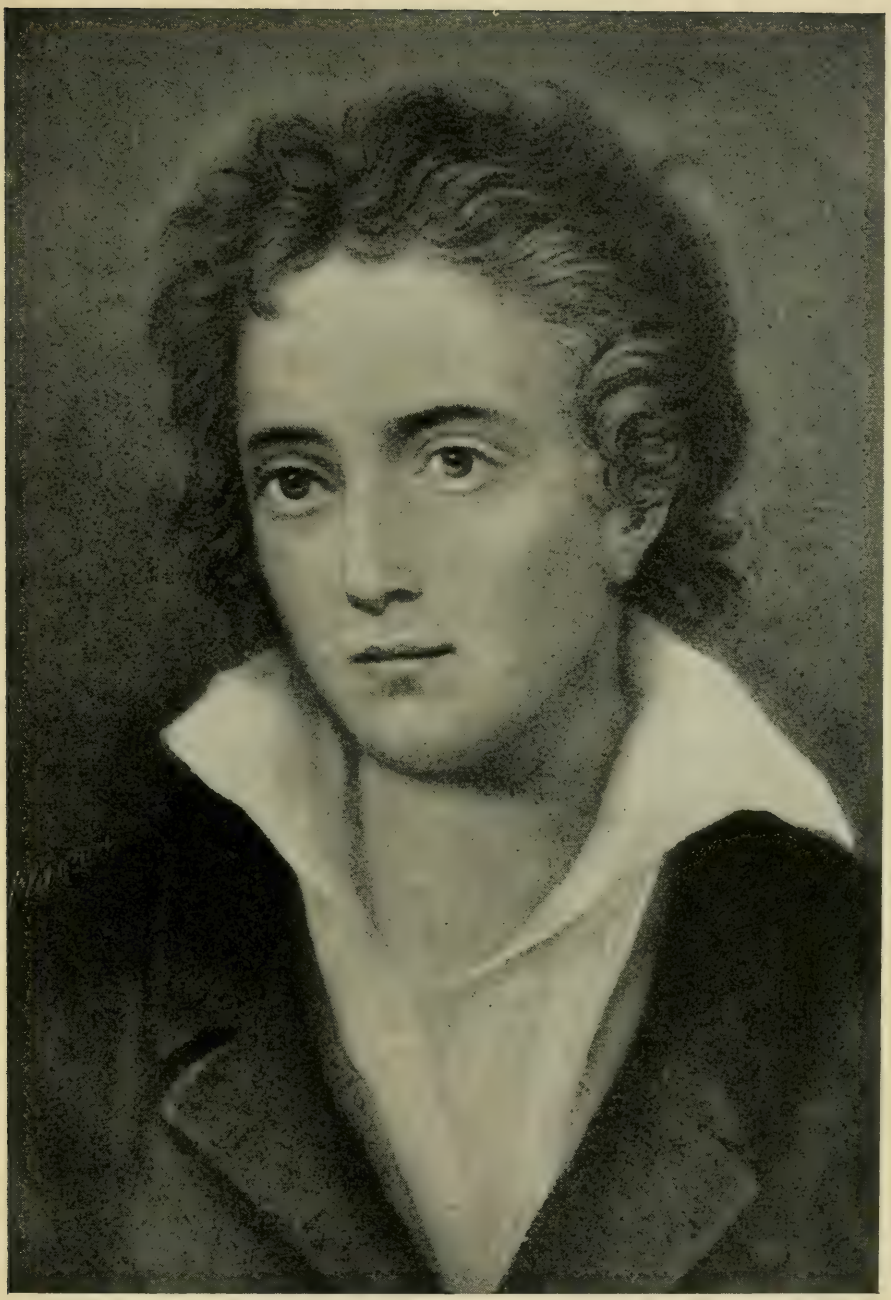
pure and good. "As God hears me," he wrote only a few months before his death, "the originating, continuing, and sustaining wish and design in my heart were to exalt the glory of His name; and, which is the same thing in other words, to promote the improvement of mankind." That he did not, with his magnificent gifts, accomplish more was due to a will of singular infirmity. He did not restrain his thought and imagination, which moved in large orbits like Saturn or Jupiter, within the range of his power of achievement. And in the composition of his works he was constantly drawn aside from the logical path of development by every beautiful prospect that burst upon him from adjacent fields. His works are rarely systematic and complete; but in spite of their obvious defects, they are suggestive, original, profound, ranking him as one of the greatest thinkers of his age.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY.

No one can doubt that Shelley's fame has been growing since his death. The age in which he wrote was little tolerant toward his revolutionary principles and ideals. But since that time human culture has gained in breadth. We have become more catholic in our sympathies and more tolerant in our judgments. Instead of an inconsiderate condemnation of Shelley, we are disposed to give him a hearing and to recognize any excellence he may be shown to possess. In our inquiry we shall find much to condemn, but also much to admire.

Shelley's life was a tragically sad one. He started out with the high and sanguine hopes of an ardent nature. He was thoroughly unselfish in his aims. He hoped to see society regenerated and to play an important part in its regeneration. But his ardent efforts were coldly received. He was misunderstood; he was harshly assailed; he finally suffered from a sense of loneliness. Even the beauties of nature failed at length to awaken the bounding joy of his earlier years. In "The Lament," the best of his short lyrics, he has given beautiful expression to his growing sadness: —

> "O world, O life, O time!
> On whose last steps I climb,
> Trembling at that where I had stood before;
> When will return the glory of your prime?
> No more — oh, never more.



P. B. Shelley

"Out of the day and night
A joy has taken flight;
Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
No more — oh, never more."

Percy Bysshe Shelley was born in Sussex, Aug. 4, 1792, in a family of wealth and titles. His mother was a woman of great beauty, but without literary tastes. His father was a choleric, obstinate man, whose notions of morality had been imbibed in the school of Chesterfield. In Parliament his statesmanship was confined to a rigid adherence to party measures. As a hard-headed, practical man, he utterly failed to appreciate the genius of his son.

Shelley exhibited in childhood the leading traits that characterized him in manhood. His literary bent manifested itself in the composition of a play before he was ten years old. At Zion House Academy, the first public school to which he was sent, he learned the classic languages almost by intuition. He was fond of reading, but was indifferent to physical sports; and while his schoolfellows were at their games, he frequently remained alone, absorbed in day-dreams. His sensitive, independent nature could not brook —

"The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes;"

and it was here, as we learn from the prologue to "The Revolt of Islam," that he first consciously espoused the principles of freedom.

At the age of thirteen Shelley entered Eton, where, as we might expect, he did not fall in readily with the discipline and customs of the school. His spirit of independence asserted itself strongly, and he organized a

formal rebellion against the fagging system. He was known as "Mad Shelley." Though he became very proficient in Latin and Greek, a large part of his time was devoted to other than the prescribed studies. He acquired knowledge with astonishing facility, for he had a retentive memory, and mastered books with extraordinary rapidity. He wrote a novel, "Zastrozzi," which, in spite of its small merit, found a publisher, and brought him forty pounds. He had a special fondness for natural science, of which he predicted great things; and though it was forbidden, he spent a good deal of time in chemical and electrical experiments. His yearning for knowledge, in connection with his imaginative temperament, led him, like another Faust, to seek communion with the world of spirits. Of this experience we have an interesting reminiscence in the splendid "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty": —

> "While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
> Thro' many a listening chamber, cave, and ruin,
> And starlight woods, with fearful steps pursuing
> Hopes of high talk with the departed dead;
> I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed.
> I was not heard, I saw them not."

In due course of time Shelley entered University College, Oxford, in 1810. His brief university career may be anticipated in its essential features. He cared little for the prescribed studies and showed a marked distaste for mathematics. He had a strong predilection for metaphysical studies, and Plato, at this time, became a favorite author. The perusal of Hume and the French materialists now confirmed him in his sceptical beliefs. His enthusiasm for natural science continued without

abatement, and his room, it is said, was a perfect chaos of chemical apparatus, electrical machines, furniture burned by acids, scattered volumes, and unfinished manuscripts.

He was tall and handsome — too beautiful to paint, it was said. His life was singularly pure; and a coarse or indecent jest aroused his indignation. His manners, governed by an innate delicacy of feeling, were charming for their unvaried grace and refinement. Two fixed principles of his character, according to the testimony of his friend and biographer Hogg, were "a strong irrepressible love of liberty; of liberty in the abstract, and somewhat after the pattern of the ancient republics, without reference to the English constitution, respecting which he knew little and cared nothing, heeding it not at all. The second was an equally ardent love of toleration of all opinions, but more especially of religious opinions; of toleration, complete, universal, unlimited; and, as a deduction and corollary from which latter principle, he felt an intense abhorrence of persecution of every kind, public or private."

Though paying but little attention to poetry, he yet relieved his severer studies with occasional verses. At length, in connection with Hogg, he turned a collection of them into burlesque effusions, breathing tyrannicide and revolution. These were published as the "Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson," an insane old woman who had attempted the life of George III. with a carving knife. The printer entered into the joke, and the book was issued in fine style. It was received as a genuine production, was soon in everybody's hands, and became the talk of the town — to the great delight, no doubt, of the youthful jokers.

But Shelley's next publication was not so pleasant in its results. He made a brief abstract of Hume's essays and published it as a two-page pamphlet entitled "The Necessity of Atheism." This he sent to various prominent people, saying that he had come across it casually, and that he desired their assistance in answering it. Those who were caught in the trap by answering, he fell upon with merciless severity. But this trick was suddenly cut short. One day (March 25, 1811) he was summoned before the master of the university; and upon his refusing to answer any questions in regard to the obnoxious pamphlet, he was unceremoniously expelled.

This unexpected action was a stunning blow and carried with it more serious consequences than the surrender of his agreeable life at the university. He was tenderly devoted to his cousin, Harriet Grove, who now discarded him on account of his atheistical views. His father, after some futile efforts at conciliation, forbade his return home, and cut off his allowance of money. Thus he was thrown upon his own resources at a time when he was poorly fitted to make his way in the world.

He went to London; and in his distress and need his sisters, who were at school there, came to his assistance. They generously turned over to him their pocket money and other small gifts, with which for a time he eked out a subsistence. The acquaintance he now formed with a school friend of his sisters was attended with momentous results. Harriet Westbrook was a pretty, bright girl of sixteen, with a pleasant voice and cheerful temper. He began to initiate her into his sceptical and free-love prin-

ciples, by which, as he said, she was to be added "to the list of the good, the disinterested, and the free." She proved an apt scholar and repaid her teacher, as was to be expected, with a feeling deeper than gratitude. She not unnaturally grew tired of school; and when her father, a wealthy coffee-house keeper, insisted on her return, she persistently refused and threw herself on the protection of Shelley. He could not resist this appeal, especially as he had advised resistance; and having now received an allowance of two hundred pounds from his father, he eloped with her to Edinburgh, where out of deference to the "anarch custom" they were married in August, 1811.

The next several years of Shelley's life were remarkably migratory. For a short time he lived at York; then at Keswick in the Lake District, where he met Southey and Wordsworth; next in Dublin, where he went as a self-appointed champion of Catholic emancipation; afterward in Wales, and then back in London. During this period his domestic life, in spite of frequent removals, was happy. His wife was fond of reading aloud to him; she pursued her studies under his direction, and in every way she proved an affectionate and helpful companion.

During this time of restless wandering Shelley diligently kept up his studies. Everywhere he went, he surrounded himself with books. He dipped into Kant and Spinoza, and studied Italian in order to read Dante, Tasso, and Petrarch. He completed his first extended poem, "Queen Mab," in 1813, and printed two hundred and fifty copies for private distribution. It is an intemperate attack on the existing form of society, government, and

religion. It sets forth the poet's peculiar social and political principles; but his fervid enthusiasm at times carries him into amusing or pitiable extravagance. Though generally esteemed but lightly, it exhibits his great lyrical power and contains passages of rare beauty. Here is the opening stanza: —

"How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!
One, pale as yonder waning moon,
With lips of lurid blue;
The other, rosy as the morn
When, throned on ocean's wave,
It blushes o'er the world:
Yet both so passing wonderful!"

Contrary to his professions, Shelley was not in the strict sense an atheist. He recognized the immanence of a world-forming and world-governing Spirit. To this belief he gives beautiful expression in "Queen Mab": —

"Spirit of Nature! thou
Life of interminable multitude;
Soul of those mighty spheres
Whose changeless paths through Heaven's deep silence lie;
Soul of that smallest being,
The dwelling of whose life
Is one faint April sun-gleam; —
Man, like these passive things,
Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth:
Like theirs, his age of endless peace,
Which time is fast maturing,
Will swiftly, surely, come;
And the unbounded frame which thou pervadest
Will be without a flaw
Marring its perfect symmetry."

Shelley was an irrepressible optimist. All the sorrows and disappointments that came to him never extinguished his confidence in humanity and in the ultimate reign of righteousness and truth. He confidently predicted a veritable golden age: —

> "But hoary-headed selfishness has felt
> Its death-blow, and is tottering to the grave:
> A brighter morn awaits the human day,
> When every transfer of earth's natural gifts
> Shall be a commerce of good words and works;
> When poverty and wealth, the thirst of fame,
> The fear of infamy, disease, and woe,
> War with its million horrors, and fierce hell,
> Shall live but in the memory of time,
> Who like a penitent libertine shall start,
> Look back, and shudder at his younger years."

As we have seen, Shelley returned to London in 1813. For reasons that are not perfectly clear, the course of his domestic life began to be perturbed. Its prosaic duties were apt to pall on his undisciplined and imaginative temper. A frequent visitor in the family of William Godwin, whose political and social principles he shared, he became infatuated with his daughter, Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, a young woman of charming person and brilliant intellect. In common with her father and Shelley, she held to the doctrine of "elective affinities," and looked upon the marriage tie as conventional tyranny. The result can easily be foreseen. Shelley deserted his wife and two children, and eloped with Miss Godwin to Switzerland in 1814. While held simply as a theory, his doctrine of free love remained comparatively harmless; but once put into practice, its cruel and hideous character became apparent.

After an absence of six weeks, Shelley returned to England. By an arrangement with his father, toward whom he cherished a morbid dislike, he received an allowance of a thousand pounds. He took up his residence on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he composed what may be regarded as his first great poem. This is "Alastor," which describes a pure and gifted youth, who, at first satisfied with the beauty and grandeur of nature, goes in search of an ideal womanhood. As ideal perfection does not exist in mortal form, his search proved in vain, and at length the imaginative wanderer, worn out by disappointment, descends to an untimely grave. It is written in majestic blank verse and first revealed the fulness of the poet's power. In the opinion of Lady Shelley, none of his poems is more characteristic than this. "The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude, the mingling of the exalted joy which the various aspects of the visible universe inspire, with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts, give a touching interest to the whole." Here is the vision of beauty that came to him in a lonely dell of Cachmire:—

"He dreamed a veilèd maid
Sat near him, talking in low, solemn tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held
His inmost sense suspended in its web
Of many-colored woof and shifting hues.
Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy,

Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
A permeating fire; wild numbers then
She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
Subdued by its own pathos; her fair hands
Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp
Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale."

In 1816, the year "Alastor" was published, he made another visit to Switzerland. Here he first met Byron, and in company with him made a tour of Lake Geneva in a boat. When, after a few months, he returned to England, an event occurred that seems to have cast a shadow over his subsequent life. His wife Harriet, after forming an illicit and unhappy relation, committed suicide by drowning. By public sentiment, as well as by his own conscience, he was held in a measure responsible for her death; and it is asserted by one of his biographers that he continued to be pursued, like another Orestes, with haunting memories. He was legally deprived of the custody of his children on the double ground of his atheistical opinions and his previous desertion.

Shortly after the suicide of his deserted wife, Shelley and Miss Godwin, presumably under the stress of outside pressure, were married in December, 1816. They were living at Marlow, a few miles from London on the Thames. It was here, in 1817, as he floated in his boat on the river, or wandered over the surrounding country, that he composed his longest poem, "The Revolt of Islam." It is written in the Spenserian stanza, and the luxuriance of its imagery greatly obscures the narrative. As in "Alastor," the hero Laon is an idealized portrait of the poet himself.

All his peculiar principles — his hatred of tyranny, enthusiasm for freedom, ardor for social regeneration, the rights of woman, and love according to the law of "elective affinity" — here find expression. The story relates the awakening of a nation to freedom under the eloquence of a hero-poet, the temporary success of the cause of human liberty, and the final triumph of despotic power. The hero as well as the heroine, sustained by a quenchless faith in the righteousness and ultimate triumph of their cause, suffer a martyr's death.

His life at Marlow was one of simple and busy routine. He rose early, read before breakfast, studied the greater part of the forenoon, dined on vegetables (for he had become a vegetarian), conversed with friends, to whom his house was always open, strolled over the country, read to his wife in the evening, and retired at ten o'clock. His favorite books at this time were Plato, Homer, the Greek tragedians, and the Bible, in which, particularly in Job, he took great delight. While assailing dogma and ecclesiasticism, he revered Christ, and in unusual degree exemplified the law of love in relation to his fellow-men. He was generous with his money and systematically aided the numerous poor about him. "Without a murmur, without ostentation," says a judicious biographer, "this heir of the richest baronet in Sussex illustrated by his own conduct those principles of democratic simplicity and of fraternal charity which formed his political and social creed."

In 1818 Shelley went to Italy, where the remaining four years of his life were spent. Apart from his roving disposition, the principal consideration in this move was his health, which was seriously threatened by a pulmo-

nary trouble. He resided successively at many places, including Milan, Pisa, Venice, Rome, and Naples. His letters of this period are excellent specimens of descriptive prose. He was not disappointed with Italy; "the aspect of its nature, the sunny sky, its majestic storms, the luxuriant vegetation of the country, and the noble marble-built cities, enchanted him." He lived on terms of intimacy with Byron, though he admired the writings more than the character of his brother bard. In August he visited him at Venice and embodied his experience in the admirable poem of "Julian and Maddalo." Besides its excellent poetry, it is notable for its portrayal of the two poets. This poem furnishes one of the remarkably few passages in Shelley's works suitable for popular quotation: —

> "Most wretched men
> Are cradled into poetry by wrong;
> They learn in suffering what they teach in song."

The year 1819 marks the climax of Shelley's creative power. What he might have accomplished if his life had been prolonged, must remain a matter of speculation; but in this year, in addition to numerous other productions (among them "Peter Bell the Third," the "Masque of Anarchy," and the fine "Ode to the West Wind"), he wrote "Prometheus Unbound" and "The Cenci." These two tragedies may be considered the masterpieces of Shelley's genius. The title of the first is an antithesis to the "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus. Prometheus stands for the upward striving spirit of our race; Jove for all that thwarts or hinders it. The Titan, with infinite patience and fortitude, defies the wrath and tortures of

the Olympian; and his ultimate deliverance typifies the triumph of humanity over the various forms of existing evil. Then, —

> "Love, from its awful throne of patient power,
> In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
> Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
> And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
> And folds over the world its healing wings."

The poem lifts us above the common experiences of life into a region of the poet's own creation. The *dramatis personæ* are superhuman beings. Though Shelley delighted in metaphysical speculation, the poem is almost wholly imaginative and descriptive. There is an almost utter absence of philosophic reflection; but the handling of form and color is unapproachably opulent and masterful. The wealth of the English language in musical rhythm and descriptive power was never exhibited to better advantage. The choral songs are delightful examples of liquid melody. Take the hymn of Asia in illustration: —

> "Life of Life, thy lips enkindle
> With their love the breath between them;
> And thy smiles before they dwindle
> Make the cold air fire; then screen them
> In those looks, where whoso gazes
> Faints, entangled in their mazes.
>
> "Child of Light! thy limbs are burning
> Through the vest which seems to hide them;
> As the radiant lines of morning
> Through the clouds, ere they divide them;
> And this atmosphere divinest
> Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest."

"The Cenci" occupies a unique place among the poet's works. In it he descends from his usual wild and imaginative flights to the realities of life. The poem is a dramatic rendering of the legend of Beatrice Cenci, who, under insupportable provocation, killed her monster of a father. The poet himself, who has criticised it freely, says: "It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I have attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development." It ranks among the best dramas produced since the death of Shakespeare.

The year 1820, which was spent chiefly at Pisa, saw the production of some of his choicest lyrics. Among these are the "Ode to Naples," the "Ode to Liberty," "To a Skylark," the most popular of his lyrics, and the inimitable "Cloud":—

"I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noon-day dreams.
From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet buds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.
I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under,
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder."

The "Letter to Maria Gisborne," in the same key as "Julian and Maddalo," is specially interesting for its characterizations of some of the poet's contemporaries.

Shelley took the poet's art seriously. While he bestowed careful labor on the correction and finish of his original drafts, he emphasized most of all the necessity of special inspiration. In his prose work "Defence of Poetry," written in 1820, he says: "Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say 'I will compose poetry.' The greatest poet even cannot say it, for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the color of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. Could this influence be durable in its original purity and force, it is impossible to predict the greatness of the results; but when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline, and the most glorious poetry that has ever been communicated to the world is probably a feeble shadow of the original conceptions of the poet."

The most important of his remaining productions (many worthy of mention must be passed over) are "Epipsychidion," addressed to a beautiful but unfortunate lady in whom Shelley became deeply interested, and "Adonais," a lament over the death of the poet Keats. The latter is an elegy of great beauty, deserving to rank with Milton's "Lycidas" and Tennyson's "In Memoriam." Shelley did not regard death as annihilation, but as a return of the soul to the Spirit of Nature, from which it originally came. Without losing its personal consciousness, the soul thus becomes participant in a broad, divine life, and has its part

in all the glories of the universe. So Shelley sings of his friend and brother poet: —

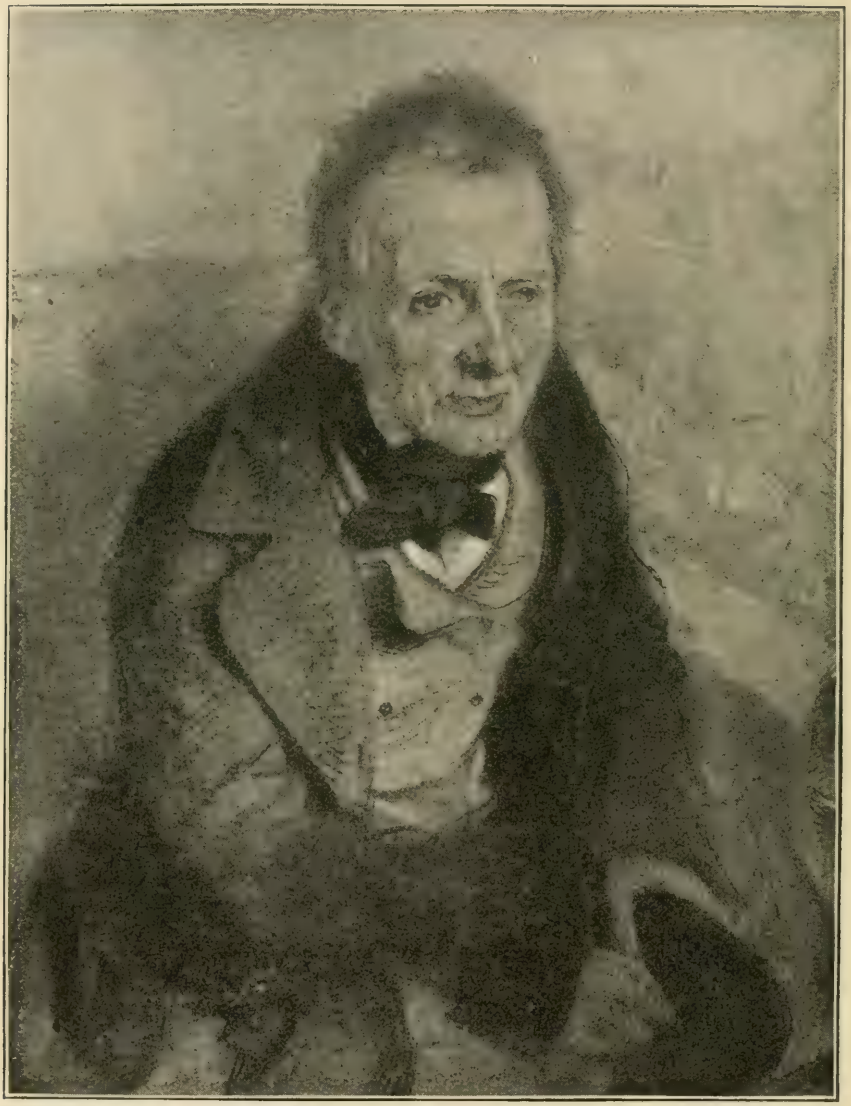
> "He is made one with Nature: there is heard
> His voice in all her music, from the moan
> Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird;
> He is a presence to be felt and known
> In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
> Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
> Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
> Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
> Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above."

The last dwelling-place of Shelley was on the Gulf of Spezia, whither he removed in April, 1822. He was now surrounded by congenial friends, and life seemed opening to him with fairer prospects. He felt a tranquillity of spirit, to which he had hitherto been a stranger. "I am content," he wrote, "if the heaven above me is calm for the passing moment." Under these favorable conditions, he began a lengthy poem, "The Triumph of Life," which was conceived on the lofty plane of his masterpieces. But the end was near. He was passionately fond of boating. He owned a schooner, in which he had gone to Leghorn to meet his friend, Leigh Hunt. On his return, July 8, 1822, he encountered a sudden squall, the boat was capsized, and he, with two companions, was drowned. His body was found a few days later, and, after the ancient Greek fashion, was cremated on the shore near Via Reggio. The poet's ashes were collected and buried in the Protestant cemetery at Rome.

Shelley is, perhaps, the most poetical of our poets. He has not the philosophic quality of Wordsworth, nor the

versatile power of Byron; but in sustained loftiness and sweep of imagination he surpasses both his great contemporaries. He can never be a popular poet. He dwells habitually in an imaginative realm beyond the popular taste and the popular capacity. No other poet seems to have the rapture of inspiration in a fuller degree. To some extent he was as the voice of one crying in the wilderness. He not only pointed out many of the evils of social life, but with steadfast faith prophesied a happier era. The principles that inspired much of his poetry, separated indeed from his extravagance, have since met with wide acceptance.

As a practical reformer, Shelley's life must be regarded as a failure. While his aims were essentially pure and noble, his ignorance of the world betrayed him into fatal mistakes. His ardor outstripped discretion; and he sought to do in a brief space what can be accomplished only in the slow evolution of centuries. His unbalanced enthusiasm betrayed him into extravagances; and thus, while seeking unselfishly to improve the state of society, he advocated radical doctrines, which in practice would have increased tenfold the evils they were intended to cure.



A photograph after painting by Archer.

Thomas De Quincey

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

De Quincey was, like Pope, of insignificant stature, but of a singularly intelligent face. A noble brow rose over his thin, finely chiselled features, and his blue eyes glowed with an unfathomable depth. He was nervously shy, and, like Hawthorne, almost morbidly averse to every sort of publicity. His mental activity was prodigious, and at his best he deserves to rank as one of the most delightful English talkers. Both as a talker and writer he used "an awfu' sicht o' words," as a shrewd Scotch servant said of him; but they were so fastidiously chosen and so musically uttered as to be little less than charming. He was a unique personality; and beyond almost all other writers he has infused his character — idiosyncrasies and all — into his writings.

De Quincey's family was an old one. When a boy about fifteen, he once met the king near Windsor. "Did your family," his Majesty kindly inquired, "come into England with the Huguenots at the revocation of the edict of Nantes?" With a flush of pride the boy answered: "Please your Majesty, the family has been in England since the Conquest." "How do you know that?" the king again asked with a smile. "From the very earliest of all English books, Robert of Gloucester's 'Metrical Chronicle,' which was written about 1280," the young scholar replied. The aristocratic prefix *de*, which had

long been dropped by the family, appears to have been resuscitated by our author himself.

Thomas de Quincey was born in Manchester, the fifth of eight children, Aug. 15, 1785. His father was "a plain English merchant" of large means, esteemed for his great integrity, and strongly attached to literary pursuits. "My mother," De Quincey says, "I may mention with honor, as still more highly gifted; for though unpretending to the name and honors of a *literary* woman, I shall presume to call her (what many literary women are not) an *intellectual* woman." Her letters are characterized by strong sense and idiomatic grace.

It is peculiarly true of De Quincey that the child was father of the man. As a child he was shy, sensitive, dreamy, marvellously precocious in thought and feeling. Owing to this strange precocity, his early years brought him unwonted anguish of spirit. But the sorrow that touched him most deeply was the death of his oldest sister Elizabeth, a child of wonderful promise and beauty, to whom he was attached with all the ardor of a supersensitive nature. He stole into the room where the body was resting in almost angelic sweetness. "Awe, not fear," he says, in a passage of deep pathos, "fell upon me; and whilst I stood, a solemn wind began to blow — the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries — in this world the one great *audible* symbol of eternity." Then a trance fell upon him, attended with a magnificent vision. But at length he came to himself, kissed the lips that he should kiss no more, and stole, like a guilty thing, from the room — a sad, imperishable memory in his heart.

De Quincey loved solitude, the charms of which he has often portrayed in his writings. "All day long," he says in recalling his childhood, "when it was not impossible for me to do so, I sought the most silent and sequestered nooks in the grounds about the house or in the neighboring fields. The awful stillness oftentimes of summer noons, when no winds were abroad, the appealing silence of gray or misty afternoons, — these were fascinations as of witchcraft. Into the woods, into the desert air, I gazed, as if some comfort lay hid in *them*. I wearied the heavens with my beseeching looks. Obstinately I tormented the blue depths with my scrutiny, sweeping them forever with my eyes, and searching them for one angelic face that might, perhaps, have permission to reveal itself for a moment."

In his later childhood De Quincey passed under the absolute tyranny of "a horrid, pugilistic boy," an elder brother who had returned home from the rough discipline of a public school. "His genius for mischief," to quote the victim's humorous account written years afterward, "amounted to inspiration; it was a divine *afflatus* which drove him in that direction; and such was his capacity for riding in whirlwinds and directing storms, that he made it his trade to create them, as a cloud-compelling Jove, in order that he *might* direct them." He despised his frail and pensive brother, and took no pains to conceal his feelings. "The pillars of Hercules," to quote the victim further, "upon which rested the vast edifice of his scorn, were these two: 1st, my physics; he denounced me for effeminacy; 2d, he assumed, and even postulated as a *datum*, which I myself could never have the face to re-

fute, my general idiocy. Physically, therefore, and intellectually, he looked upon me as below notice; but, *morally*, he assured me that he would give me a written character of the very best description, whenever I chose to apply for it. 'You're honest,' he said; 'you're willing, though lazy; you *would* pull, if you had the strength of a flea; and, though a monstrous coward, you don't run away!'"

The family now lived at Greenhay, a handsome residence a mile or so from Manchester, and the two boys, on their way to school, had to pass daily by a cotton mill. The elder brother, with uncontrollable martial propensities, stirred up a feud with the factory boys, which led every day to a pitched battle with stones. As commander-in-chief, he held his timid brother to a rigid military obedience. The war raged with varying fortunes, month after month. Though sometimes denounced or cashiered for cowardice, Thomas's conduct appeared on the whole commendable, and before his eighth year he was elevated by his brother to the rank of major-general. For some three years and a half the shy, timid, dreamy boy, subject to the mischievous tyranny of his brother, knew no rest day or night. It was only when his brother went to London to study drawing, that he once more regained his freedom.

In 1796, the year to which the preceding incidents have brought us, De Quincey was placed in the public school of Bath, a town to which his mother had recently removed. He brought to his new surroundings an unusual amount of information gathered from miscellaneous reading. In Latin he was recognized as little short of a prodigy and was weekly "paraded for distinction at the supreme tribunal of the school." The result may easily be foreseen.

Some of his jealous comrades inaugurated what he described as a state of "warfare at a public school." He was threatened with immediate "annihilation"; but fortunately for English literature, the threat was never carried out.

He next spent a year or more at a private school in Wiltshire, the chief recommendation of which was its religious character. He disliked the school, as it afforded only a narrow field for the display of his attainments. Without effort he stood at the head. His attainments in Greek now equalled his attainments in Latin. "At thirteen," he says, "I wrote Greek with ease; and at fifteen my command of that language was so great that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but would converse in Greek fluently and without embarrassment." This fluency he acquired by his habit of turning the daily papers into Greek. "That boy," said one of his masters to a stranger, "that boy could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one."

The year 1800 De Quincey designates as the period of his entry into the world. He was invited by Lord Westfort, a young friend of his own age, to accompany him on a visit to Ireland. The various experiences of the next few months lifted him to what he calls "premature manhood," for he was yet but fifteen years of age. He was invited to court entertainments; he passed a short time in "the nation of London." More than all, he met on a boat a young lady of great beauty and culture, who inspired him with a new and uplifting reverence for woman. This incident fixed, as he thought, a great era of change in his life. "Ever after, throughout the period of youth," he

said, "I was jealous of my own demeanor, reserved and awe-struck, in the presence of woman; reverencing often not so much *them* as my own ideal of woman latent in them. For I carried about with me the idea, to which I often seemed to see an approximation, of —

> 'A perfect woman, nobly planned,
> To warn, to comfort, and command.'"

After spending some weeks in Ireland, where he met a number of the most distinguished men of the day, he returned to England and passed several months at the residence of Lady Carbery, an intimate friend of his mother's. Chiefly through the influence of De Quincey's mother, Lady Carbery had become deeply interested in religion. Wishing to ground herself more thoroughly in theological lore, she consulted her youthful but scholarly friend. She was advised to study the Greek Testament; and under his enthusiastic tuition she made rapid progress. She called him her "Admirable Crichton." As will be readily understood, these were days of rapid improvement and great happiness to De Quincey; and when he left the park gates of Laxton, it was not without forebodings for the future.

He was now, late in 1800, placed in the Manchester Grammar School. He was thoroughly dissatisfied with the school; and when his mother, after a year and a half, refused to listen to his pleas for removal, he formed the desperate resolution to run away. He went to Wales, where he tramped over the country at will, often, for the sake of economy, sleeping under the open sky and dining on the blackberries by the roadside. At length growing tired of this wandering life, which, however, was not with-

out interesting adventures, he determined to seek his fortune in London. He ceased writing to his mother; and thus depriving himself of the small stipend that had been allowed him, he was brought to the verge of beggary and starvation in the great metropolis. The incidents of his London vagrancy — his sleeping on the straw in Brunell's office, his efforts to borrow money, and his acquaintance with the poor outcast Ann of Oxford Street, who once saved his life — are all graphically and pathetically told in his "Confessions." Finally he was discovered and reclaimed by his friends.

In December, 1803, De Quincey entered Worcester College, Oxford. He was connected with the university for five years, but finally left it without a degree. He led a life of great retirement. He calculates that for the first two years he spoke less than a hundred words. But his morbid seclusion and silence were not spent in idleness. He had an insatiable thirst for reading and books; and to increase his library he sorely stinted his wardrobe. He lamented the excessive devotion to Latin and Greek, and the utter neglect of English literature at the university. He stoutly maintained the superiority of modern over ancient literature. "We engage," he said, "to produce many scores of passages from Chaucer, not exceeding fifty to eighty lines, which contain more of picturesque simplicity, more tenderness, more fidelity to nature, more felicity of sentiment, more animation of narrative, and more truth of character than can be matched in all the 'Iliad' or the 'Odyssey.'"

In 1808 he left Oxford, to which he professed to owe nothing. Of its vast riches he took nothing away. Once

seeking relief from neuralgic pain, he resorted to laudanum; and, like Coleridge, he became henceforth an opium fiend. It never gained quite so complete a mastery over him as over his illustrious contemporary; but for more than fifty years, sometimes in enormous quantities, it remained a necessity with him. He became, in some measure, the apologist of opium, to which he addresses more than one eloquent but unpleasing apostrophe.

Before his connection with Oxford ceased, he had already met several writers destined to achieve great distinction. On one of his frequent visits to London, he met Charles Lamb. In 1807 he met Coleridge and Wordsworth, to whom he had been especially attracted by the "Lyrical Ballads." The poems in this volume had been to him as "the ray of a new morning." It is a striking proof of his literary insight and courageous independence that he championed Wordsworth's poetry at a time when it was almost universally decried.

In November, 1809, De Quincey took up his residence at Grasmere, occupying the pretty cottage that Wordsworth had just left for Allan Bank. Here, first as a bachelor and afterward as a married man, he lived till his removal to Edinburgh in 1830. He devoted himself to study, particularly to German metaphysics, with great assiduity. He associated on terms of intimacy with all the other celebrities of the Lake District, including Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and Wilson. For a time he was almost utterly prostrated from the use of opium. A quart of ruby-colored laudanum in a decanter and a book of German metaphysics by its side — these he mentions as sure indications of his being in the neighborhood.

In his "Literary Reminiscences," one of the most interesting volumes of his collected works, De Quincey dwells principally on this period of his life. Nowhere else do we find life in the Lake District so finely portrayed. The sketches of Coleridge and Wordsworth are extended and exquisite studies, though at times there is a suggestion of venom in his treatment of these great writers. His early reverence for Wordsworth, whose hospitality he frequently enjoyed, was little short of idolatry; but in later years, owing apparently to the poet's self-complacent unresponsiveness, De Quincey became estranged almost to the point of bitterness.

The inherited means, which De Quincey had hitherto lived upon, were now exhausted. Under the stress of domestic necessities, he roused himself, by a prodigious effort, from the intellectual torpor to which the opium habit had reduced him. In 1821 he began his literary career with his "Confessions of an Opium-Eater," which appeared in the *London Magazine* anonymously. The "Confessions" were honestly autobiographical; and besides many interesting facts of his early life, they told of the growing power of the terrible drug, and described, in passages of almost incomparable splendor, the nightly visions that came to him waking and sleeping. The articles, both for their style and matter, attracted general attention, and opened to him the best magazines of the day. He wrote about one hundred and fifty articles, which taken together, with the exception of two or three unimportant books, constitute his literary remains.

In 1824 he published an article on Goethe, based on Carlyle's translation of "Wilhelm Meister." The article

was chiefly an onslaught on the great German, who was represented as a tiresome and immoral impostor. But the translator himself came in for a good share of criticism, his Scotticisms, his mistakes in German, and his awkward prose being dwelt upon. The review accidentally fell into the surly Scotchman's hands; and in his "Reminiscences," where he speaks of the matter, he more than quits the score with a sketch in *aqua fortis*. De Quincey, he says, "was a pretty little creature, full of wire-drawn ingenuities, bankrupt enthusiasms, bankrupt pride, with the finest silver-toned low voice, and most elaborate gently winding courtesies and ingenuities in conversation. . . . A bright, ready, and melodious talker, but in the end inconclusive and long-winded. One of the smallest man figures I ever saw; shaped like a pair of tongs, and hardly above five feet in all. When he sate, you would have taken him by candlelight for the beautifullest little child; blue-eyed, sparkling face, had there not been something, too, which said, 'Eccovi — this child has been in hell.'"

In 1825 De Quincey brought out "Walladmor," which he pronounced "the most complete hoax ever perpetrated." At this period there was a great demand, not only in England but on the Continent, for the Waverley novels. Accordingly, when no new work of Scott's was forthcoming in 1823, a German writer perpetrated the forgery of "Walladmor" — a long-winded and stupid production. De Quincey gave it a hasty but favorable review, and as a consequence he was commissioned to translate it. He entered upon the task; but a careful examination showed him its utter worthlessness. It was too late, however, to retreat. And, accordingly, he condensed and re-

wrote the book, reducing the three German volumes to two slender English ones. It thus became a forgery upon a forgery; but seeing the humorous side of the thing, De Quincey dedicated his pretended translation to the German author in a preface of excellent humor and drollery.

After 1826 his literary career is transferred from London to Edinburgh. Through the influence of Wilson, with whom he had roamed over the valleys and mountains of the Lake District, he became a contributor to *Blackwood.* Besides articles on Lessing and Kant, he published in 1827 his famous essay "On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts." It is a piece of sustained wit and humor. He deals with murder as some critics deal with literature: he admits that morally it is not exactly to be approved; but "when tried by principles of taste, it turns out sometimes to be a very meritorious performance."

In 1830 De Quincey moved his family to Edinburgh, and ten years later he occupied the cottage of Lasswade, a few miles out of the city. His life was now one of almost unintermitting suffering and struggle. In 1835 he lost his faithful wife Margaret, to whom he was deeply attached, and who, throughout the sore trials of her domestic life, had steadfastly maintained her character as a brave and gentle woman. His health was frequently frail, and at times he succumbed to his appetite for opium. He avoided society, and it was only with difficulty that he could be entrapped for a dinner party. But through it all he continued to produce, at the rate of half a dozen a year, that marvellous series of papers that have given him an imperishable place in English literature. Besides those

already mentioned, the following are worthy of special attention: "Suspiria de Profundis," "The English Mail Coach," "Revolt of the Tartars," "On War," "Joan of Arc," "Style," "Rhetoric," "Language."

De Quincey rejects the common opinion that style is the *dress* of thought. To him it is something far more profound. Adopting a happy phrase of Wordsworth's, he defines style as "the *incarnation* of thought." He bestowed exceeding care on his composition. He had an exquisite sense of the force of words and beauty of form. He had a singularly sensitive ear and took great pains, as he tells us, not only to avoid cacophony, but also to frame musical sentences. For precision in the use of language and for melody in the structure of his periods, De Quincey takes high rank among English writers. Less monotonous than Gibbon or Macaulay, his style varies, according to the changing thought, from the careless ease of colloquial forms to the sustained grandeur of impassioned eloquence. The Dream Fugue in "The English Mail Coach" may be described as a prose poem.

De Quincey did not begin his literary career until his mind was well stored with knowledge. His reading covered a wide field, including not only English literature and English history, but also Greek and Latin literature, German metaphysics, and a whole multitude of unusual and nondescript works. His well-kept library numbered more than five thousand volumes. His writings cover a wide range of subjects and are peculiarly rich in their allusions. History, nature, art, poetry, music, are all called upon to grace the substantial structure of his thought. His vocabulary is exceedingly copious; he not only drew on the

native Saxon and Latin elements of our language, but ruthlessly lugged in Latin, Greek, French, German, or whatever other tongue furnished him with a fitting phrase.

To De Quincey we owe an interesting distinction in literature — one that is readily applicable to his own writings. "There is first," he says, "the literature of *knowledge*, and, secondly, the literature of *power*. The function of the first is to *teach;* the function of the second is to *move:* the first is a rudder, the second an oar or a sail. The first speaks to the *mere* discursive understanding; the second speaks ultimately, it may happen, to the higher understanding or reason, but always *through* the affections of pleasure and sympathy." To this latter kind of literature belong those works of De Quincey — "The Confessions," "Suspiria," "English Mail Coach," "Murder as a Fine Art," "Joan of Arc," and the "Autobiographical Sketches" and "Literary Reminiscences" — by which he will retain a permanent place among great English writers.

De Quincey can hardly be classed as a great thinker. He is ingenious and graceful rather than profound. He rarely submitted to the restraints of a strict logical method. His digressions are as frequent as those of Coleridge, but are held under better control: instead of running entirely away with him, they always return, and sometimes felicitously, to the main subject in hand. He is conscious of his digressive style and sometimes makes humorous reference to it. In his essay "On War," after being switched off for a couple of pages, he returns to the main line of thought with the remark: "This digression, now, on anecdotes, is what the learned call an *excursus*, and I am afraid

too long by half — not strictly in proportion. But don't mind *that*. I'll make it all right by being too short upon something else at the next opportunity; and then nobody can complain."

De Quincey's life was preëminently intellectual. "Without breach of truth or modesty," he says, "I may affirm that my life has been, on the whole, the life of a philosopher; from my birth I was made an intellectual creature; and intellectual in the highest sense my pursuits and pleasures have been, even from my school-boy days." Even his irrepressible humor has an eminently intellectual flavor. De Quincey was not, like Carlyle, a great moral force in the world. While capable of deep affection, he was not subject to violent outbursts of indignation at the sight of evil. He did not set himself up as a reformer. "I am too much of a eudæmonist," he said; "I hanker too much after a state of happiness for myself and others." He sought refuge from the hard conflicts of the world in the retirement of his study. He tried to smooth the path of life by tireless courtesies of manner and speech. He possessed in an eminent degree "the grace of perfect breeding, everywhere persuasive, and nowhere emphatic."

His death, which occurred Dec. 8, 1859, was calm and beautiful. His mind seemed to revert to his early associations. At the last his heart asserted its supremacy over the intellect, and his last act was to throw up his arms and exclaim, as if with a cry of surprised recognition, "Sister, sister, sister!" Perhaps it was a vision of his dearly loved sister Elizabeth, dead nearly seventy years before, who had now come to lead him beyond the river.

VICTORIAN AGE.

PRINCIPAL WRITERS.

NOVELISTS. — Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton (1805–1873). Voluminous and popular novelist and dramatist; author of "Eugene Aram" (1831), "The Last Days of Pompeii" (1834), "Last of the Barons" (1843), "The Caxtons" (1849), "My Novel" (1853), etc. "The Lady of Lyons" and "Richelieu" are two of the best modern dramas.

Benjamin Disraeli, Earl of Beaconsfield (1804–1881). Statesman and novelist; author of "Vivian Grey" (1827), "Coningsby" (1844), "Lothair" (1870), "Endymion" (1881), and many others.

Charles Kingsley (1819–1875). Clergyman, poet, and novelist; author of "Alton Locke" (1849), "Hypatia" (1853), "Westward Ho" (1855), "Hereward the Wake" (1866), etc.

Frederick Marryat (1792–1848). Novelist of nautical adventure, who is unsurpassed in his sphere. "Peter Simple," "Jacob Faithful," and "Mr. Midshipman Easy" are perhaps his best. Other novels are "The Phantom Ship" (1839), "Masterman Ready" (1841), "The Privateersman" (1844), and many more.

Anthony Trollope (1815–1882). One of the most voluminous of all novelists; author of "The Warden" (1855), "Barchester Towers" (1857), "Framley Parsonage" (1860), "Can You Forgive Her" (1864), "Phineas Finn" (1869), etc.

Charles Reade (1814–1884). Author of "Peg Woffington" (1852), "It is Never Too Late to Mend" (1856), "The Cloister and the Hearth" (1861), etc.

Wilkie Collins (1824–1889). Author of numerous novels, among which are "The Woman in White" (1860), "No Name" (1862), "The Moonstone" (1868), "Man and Wife" (1870), etc. Some of his novels have been dramatized.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1845–1894). Novelist of the new romantic school; author of "Virginibus Puerisque" (1881), "Treasure Island"

(1883), "Prince Otto" (1885), "Kidnapped" (1886), "The Master of Ballantrae" (1889).

Dinah Maria Craik (1826–1888). Author of many novels, preëminent among which are "John Halifax, Gentleman" and "A Life for a Life" (1859). Others are "Mistress and Maid" (1863), "A Noble Life" (1866), "The Woman's Kingdom" (1869), etc.

POETRY. — Arthur Hugh Clough (1819–1861): "The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich" (1848) and "Depsychus" (1862). A poet of doubt, who "has neither the strength to believe nor the courage to disbelieve."

Lord Lytton ("Owen Meredith") (1831–1892). Statesman, novelist, and poet; author of the following poetical works: "Clytemnestra" (1855), "The Wanderer" (1859), "Lucile" (1860), "Fables in Song," and several others.

William Morris (1834–1896). Novelist and poet. His principal poetical works are "The Defence of Guinevere" (1858), "The Life and Death of Jason" (1867), "The Earthly Paradise" (1868–1871), "Love is Enough" (1873).

Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837–). Poet, dramatist, and critic; author of "Atalanta in Calydon: a Tragedy" (1865), "Poems and Ballads" (1866), "Siena: a Poem" (1868), "Songs Before Sunrise" (1871), "Poems and Ballads" (1878), "Songs of the Spring Tides" (1880), and many others.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882). Artist and poet; author of "The Blessed Damozel" (1848), "Sister Helen" (1851), "Early Italian Poets" (1861), "Poems" (1870–1882). Rossetti, Swinburne, and Morris are the chief representatives of the romantic spirit in the poetry of the Victorian Age.

Henry Austin Dobson (1840–). Poet and critic; author of "Vignettes in Rhyme" (1873), "Proverbs in Porcelain" (1877), "At the Sign of the Lyre" (1885), etc.

Andrew Lang (1844–). Poet and prose writer; author of "Ballads in Blue China" (1881), "Rhymes à la Mode" (1884), "Ballads of Books" (1888). Among his prose writings are "Custom and Myth" (1884) and "Myth, Ritual, and Religion" (1887).

Edwin Arnold (1832–). Sanskrit scholar, editor, and poet; author of "The Light of Asia" (1878), "Pearls of the Faith" (1882), "The Song Celestial" (1885), and "The Light of the World" (1891).

William Watson (1844–). Poet, and author of "The Prince's Guest" (1880), "Wordsworth's Grave" (1889), and "Poems" (1892).

HISTORY. — George Grote (1794–1871). Member of Parliament, an extreme Liberal in politics, and author of an excellent "History of Greece" (1846–1856), and intended as an antidote to Mitford.

Connop Thirlwall (1797–1875). Bishop of St. David's, and author of a "History of Greece" (1835–1847), likewise written from a Liberal point of view. This work, as well as that by Grote, is standard.

Henry Hart Milman (1791–1868). Dean of St. Paul's, and author of a "History of the Jews" (1829), "History of Latin Christianity" (1854). In addition to his excellent histories, he edited Gibbon, and published a few poems.

James A. Froude (1818–1894). Essayist and historian; author of a "History of England" (1856–1869), "The English in Ireland" (1871–1874), "Short Studies on Great Subjects" (1867), "Life of Carlyle" (1884). One of the most interesting of historians, but sometimes inaccurate.

Edward Augustus Freeman (1823–1892). A voluminous historian; author of "A History of Architecture" (1849), "History of the Saracens" (1856), "History of the Norman Conquest" (1867–1879), "Growth of the English Constitution" (1872), and many other works, all distinguished for careful statement.

W. E. H. Lecky (1838–). Philosophic historian; author of "Leaders of Public Opinion in Ireland" (1861), "History of Rationalism in Europe" (1865), "History of European Morals" (1869), and a "History of England in the Eighteenth Century" (1878–1890).

John Richard Green (1837–1883). Clergyman, and author of "Short History of the English People" (1874), "History of the English People" (1878–1880), a work in four volumes, and "The Making of England" (1882). All are admirable works.

Thomas Arnold (1795–1842). Clergyman, head-master of Rugby, and author of five volumes of sermons, an edition of Thucydides, and a "History of Rome" in three volumes.

Sir Archibald Alison (1792–1867). Lawyer and historian; author of "History of Europe" (1839–1859), "Life of the Duke of Marlborough" (1847), etc. His "History of Europe" is interesting rather than profound.

SCIENCE and PHILOSOPHY. — Charles Darwin (1809–1882). Eminent naturalist; author of "Journal of Researches" (1839–1845), "Origin of Species" (1859), "Descent of Man" (1871), etc. His writings have exerted an immense influence on modern thought.

Herbert Spencer (1820–). The ablest of evolutionist philosophers; author of "Principles of Psychology" (1855), "First Principles" (1862), "Principles of Biology" (1867), "Principles of Psychology" (1872), "The Study of Sociology" (1872), etc.

Thomas Henry Huxley (1825–1895). Biologist, lecturer, and essayist; author of "Oceanic Hydrozoa" (1859), "Man's Place in Nature" (1863), "Lay Sermons" (1870), "Introduction to the Classification of Animals" (1877), "Science, Culture, and Other Essays" (1882), etc. He has done much to popularize scientific knowledge.

John Stuart Mill (1806–1873). Editor, essayist, and philosopher; author of a "System of Logic" (1843), "Political Economy" (1848), "Representative Government" (1860), "Subjection of Women" (1869), "Examination of Hamilton's Philosophy" (1865), etc.

Sir William Hamilton (1788–1856). One of the ablest Scotch metaphysicians; author of "Discussions in Philosophy, Literature, and Education" (1853), "Lectures on Metaphysics and Logic," published after his death.

Hugh Miller (1802–1856). Geologist and able writer; author of "Old Red Sandstone" (1841), "Footprints of the Creator," "My Schools and Schoolmasters," and "Testimony of the Rocks," the last being an attempt to reconcile geology and Genesis.

GREAT REPRESENTATIVE WRITERS.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.
CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ.
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.
CHARLES DICKENS.
GEORGE ELIOT.
ROBERT BROWNING.
ALFRED TENNYSON.
THOMAS CARLYLE.
MATTHEW ARNOLD.
JOHN RUSKIN.
ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

VIII.

VICTORIAN AGE.

(1832–1900.)

Grandeur of the age — Inventions — Notable era — Scientific investigation — Practical tendencies — Educational advancement — Periodical press — International relations — Political progress — Social improvement — Religion and philanthropy — Creative and diffusive literature — Essay writing — History — Fiction — Realism and romanticism — Poetry — THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY — CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ — WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY — CHARLES DICKENS — GEORGE ELIOT — ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING — ROBERT BROWNING — ALFRED TENNYSON — THOMAS CARLYLE — MATTHEW ARNOLD — JOHN RUSKIN.

IT may be safely claimed that upon the whole there has been no grander age in the history of the world. It may lack, as some are disposed to claim, the æsthetic culture of the Age of Pericles, the great martial spirit of ancient Rome, the lofty ideals of the age of chivalry. But as we compare the conditions of the present day with those of any period of the past, who can doubt the fact of human progress? The world has grown into a liberty, intelligence, happiness, and morality unknown at any previous time. To be sure, the golden age has not been reached; that lies, and perhaps far distant, in the future. Many evils in society, in the state, and in the church need to be corrected. But the advancement during the present century, and particularly during the reign of Queen Victoria, has been marvellously rapid.

If we think of the wonderful improvements in the mechanic arts, we recognize this period as an age of invention. Within a few decades are comprised more numerous and more important inventions than are found in many preceding centuries taken together. Social and industrial life has been thoroughly revolutionized. Think of the wonders accomplished by steam! It has supplied a new motive power, accelerated travel, and built up manufacturing inland towns and cities. Electricity is at present accomplishing scarcely less. It carries our messages, lights our cities, and runs our street railways. The capacity of the printing-press has been vastly increased. While the sewing-machine has taken the place of the needle in the house, the reaper and the mowing-machine have supplanted the sickle and the scythe in the field. The breech-loading and repeating rifle has driven out the muzzle-loading flint-lock.

These are but a few of the inventions belonging to the Victorian Age. "A reign," says Justin McCarthy, "which saw in its earlier years the application of the electric current to the task of transmitting messages, the first successful attempts to make use of steam for the business of transatlantic navigation, the general development of the railway system all over these countries, and the introduction of the penny-post, must be considered to have obtained for itself, had it secured no other memorials, an abiding place in history." Many a man still living has seen the entire system of manufacturing, travel, agriculture, and transmission of intelligence completely changed, witnessing a greater transformation than if he had lived through the preceding five centuries.

The present period is an age of scientific investigation and progress. The Baconian spirit prevails; and investigation — systematic, minute, and prolonged — has taken the place of empty speculation. In the presence of rapid changes, tradition has lost much of its power; and with their growing intelligence men are less willing to be guided by mere authority. Careful and patient toilers are at work in every department of learning; and nature, questioned as never before, is gradually yielding up her secrets. All the natural sciences — physics, zoölogy, botany, geology, chemistry, physiology, astronomy — have been wonderfully expanded; Faraday, Tyndall, Darwin, Spencer, and others are honored names in natural science.

The same patient methods of investigation are applied to the study of the mind, the origin of man, the history of the past. The theory of evolution, sometimes with greater or less modification, has been generally accepted, and, like the law of gravitation or the Copernican system, has greatly changed our views of nature and of history. Many old beliefs have been modified or destroyed; but the general result has been to give us greater breadth of thought and a clearer insight into the laws of God.

This is preëminently a practical age, aiming at visible results. The vast resources, which science and invention have placed at our command, are applied in various ways to the comfort and well-being of man. The material wealth of every country is being developed; and daring explorers, supported by private enterprise or royal bounty, are sent to examine unknown regions. Every effort is put forth to make living less costly and more comfortable. No doubt, as is pointed out sometimes, this practical tendency

goes too far, subjecting æsthetic and spiritual interests to material ends. The ideal is, in too great a degree, banished from life. But, in spite of these facts, the practical tendency of our age deserves to be considered one of its many claims to superiority.

It is an age of educational advancement. In England as elsewhere, schools of every class have been multiplied, and education has been brought within the reach of the common people. The methods of instruction are more nearly conformed to the nature of the child, and the subjects of study are designed to fit the pupil for the duties of practical life. In higher education the change is no less remarkable; the traditional curriculum, consisting largely of Latin and Greek, has been greatly expanded, and subjects of immediate practical importance — the modern languages, natural and political science, the mother tongue, and history — receive increased attention. Women now have the advantages of higher education, either in separate or in coeducational colleges.

Intelligence was never so generally diffused. The periodical press exerts an immense influence. Great dailies spread before the people every morning the news of the world. Monthly magazines and reviews, unsurpassed in tasteful form and literary excellence, have been greatly multiplied. They powerfully stimulate literary activity, while cultivating the taste, intelligence, and character of the people. They are often the original vehicles, not only for what is best in fiction, poetry, and criticism, but also for what is most interesting in science and history.

The present is an age of close international relations. Submarine cables and fleet steamers bring the various

nations of the earth close together. They are united by commercial interests. They share in common social, industrial, scientific, and literary interests; and what is true of England in these particulars is substantially true of America or, in a less degree, of France, or of Germany. Christendom has become more homogeneous; culture is more cosmopolitan. With a clearer knowledge of one another, and with common interests fostered by commerce, the nations of the earth have developed kindlier feelings. From time to time they unite in great expositions of their choicest products, and settle minor differences by diplomacy or arbitration.

It is a time of political progress. The democratic principles, announced and defended in America and France at the close of the last century, have become generally diffused. It is now commonly recognized that governments exist, not for sovereigns or favored classes, but for the people. New reform bills have greatly extended the right of suffrage in England, the elective franchise being extended, in certain cases, even to women. The science of government is better understood, and legislative enactments have become more intelligent and equitable. The public administration has become purer. If bribery, self-aggrandizement, and dishonesty still exist, these evils are much less frequent than in former ages. Public men live in the light and are held accountable at the bar of public opinion.

The present period is an era of social progress. The increased facilities of production have greatly cheapened the necessaries of life. Wages have generally increased; and the poor, as well as the rich, live better than ever

before. Women enjoy greater advantages. But, at the same time, there is great social unrest. Many believe that the existing economic conditions are not final. Wasteful wealth sometimes exists by the side of starving poverty. Gigantic combinations of capital, which often abuse their power to wrong the people, are commonly recognized as a serious evil. Great attention is given to the study of economic and sociological questions, which are treated, not only in scientific, but also in fictitious, works.

The religious advancement of the period under consideration is specially noteworthy. The conflict between dogma and science, which at times has been sharp, has not been prejudicial to Christianity. Superstition has become a thing of the past, and the emphasis of religious teaching is now centred upon fundamental and practical truths. The Gospel is looked upon as a rule of life for the present world, and Christ is becoming more and more the conscious ideal of men. The ascetic spirit has given place to an active spirit, which finds the highest service of God in bravely meeting the duties of everyday life. The asperities of religious sects are softening; Jews as well as Roman Catholics are admitted to Parliament; religious tests are abolished at Oxford and Cambridge; Dissenters, since 1880, have had the right to bury in the public churchyards with their own religious services. The Evangelical Alliance and the Young Men's Christian Association are the practical manifestation of the general tendency toward closer union and coöperation among Christian people.

In harmony with the practical tendencies of the age,

religion has become more benevolent in its activities. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man are appreciated as never before. The church is active in missionary work at home and abroad. It is prominent in every work that seeks to relieve the unfortunate and reclaim the lost. The treatment of the unfortunate and the criminal classes is more humane. The insane are no longer chained in loathsome cells, the unfortunate debtor is not thrown into jail, the petty criminal is not hanged. The church seeks to bring a pure and benevolent spirit to the settlement of the great social and political problems of the day.

The foregoing survey of present conditions, as they exist in England and elsewhere, enables us to understand more fully the literary character of the Victorian Age. It will be recognized that this period has been exceedingly favorable to general literature. The rich and varied life of the English people has been reflected in their writing. If we seek to characterize this period on its literary side, we may designate it as *creative* and *diffusive*. New fields of thought have been opened up; new questions have been brought before society; and the interests of life — social, religious, industrial, scientific — have been enormously multiplied. Never before, if we except the drama, was English literature so rich and so varied. In style there has been a return to nature; at the same time there has been an artistic finish, particularly in prose, unknown in previous eras.

With the establishment of many periodicals, essay writing has attained a new importance and excellence. In the days of Addison and Johnson, the essay was devoted

chiefly to brief discussions of light social and moral topics. The great critics of the Age of Scott were usually ponderous. But at present, in the form of popular reviews and magazine articles, the essay deals with every subject of interest or importance. The scholar, the scientist, the philosopher, the historian, each uses the periodical press to set forth the results of his studies and investigations. Our leading magazines and reviews register the successive stages of human progress; and without an acquaintance with their contents, it is difficult to keep fully abreast with the times.

A notable advance is discernible in the writing of history. Greater prominence is given to the social condition of the people. The sources of information have been greatly enlarged, and historians are expected to base their statements on trustworthy data. Besides, a philosophy of history has been recognized. Greater attention is given to the moving causes of events and to the general tendencies in national life. With this greater trustworthiness and more philosophic treatment, history has lost nothing of its excellence of style. If it has given up the uniform stateliness of Robertson and Gibbon, it has become more graphic, more varied, and more interesting.

No other department of literature has shown a richer development during the present period than fiction. It occupies the place filled by the drama during the Elizabethan period. The plot is skilfully conducted; the characters represent every class of society; the thoughts are often the deepest of which our nature is capable. Fiction is no longer simply a means of amusement. Without laying aside its artistic character, it has become in great measure

didactic. In the form of historical romance, it seeks to reproduce in a vivid manner the thoughts, feelings, and customs of other ages. The novel of contemporary life often holds up to view the foibles and vices of modern society. In many cases fiction is made the means of popularizing various social, religious, and political views.

During the Victorian Age there has been a notable reaction, generally called *realism*, against the romanticism of the earlier part of the century. The scientific spirit of the time became dissatisfied with the fanciful pictures of past ages and with the impossibilities of wild romance. Realism, as the term indicates, adheres to reality. Discarding what is idealistic or unreal in characters and situations, it aims at being true to life. All the greatest novelists of this period — Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot — were, in the best sense of the word, realists. Their works present a striking contrast with those of Scott, who was the prince of romanticists.

As an effort to represent life as it is, we must acknowledge the worth of realism. In its proper application, it places the novel on an immovable basis. Like Shakespeare's plays, it holds the mirror up to nature. Unfortunately, the realistic writers have not, in many cases, been true to their fundamental principles. The great continental leaders of realism — Tolstoi, Zola, Ibsen — have been tainted with a fatal pessimism. Realists of this type seem to see only one side of life — the darker side of sin, and wretchedness, and despair. They often descend to what is coarse, impure, obscene. No doubt their pictures are true, as far as they go; but the fatal defect of their work is that it does not reflect life as a whole. It does

not portray the pure and noble and happy side of life, which is just as real as the other.

Except in the hands of genius, realism is apt to be dull. It gives us uninteresting photographs. There are times when we do not so much care for instruction as for amusement and recreation. This fact opens a legitimate field for the imaginative story-teller. There is to-day a decided reaction against realism in the form of what has been called the new romanticism. It does not present to us elaborate studies of life, but entertains us with an interesting or exciting story. The leaders of this movement in England are Doyle, Stevenson, Weyman, and Hope, whose works in recent years have been widely read.

As might be expected from the practical tendencies of the time, poetry is less prominent in literature than in some previous periods. But it has had not a few illustrious devotees, who stand out with prominence in the Victorian era. There are, perhaps, no names that stand higher than those of Tennyson and Browning. Poetry partakes of the many-sided character of the age. While the poetic imagery inherited from Greece and Rome has been swept away by the progress of science, poetry itself has gained in variety and depth. It treats with equal facility the present and the past. It voices the manifold interests and aspirations of the age — social, political, scientific, religious. Never before did the stream of poetry have such volume and power; and if sometimes, as in Clough and Matthew Arnold, it has been lacking in faith and cheer, it has in the main borne to men a message of hope, courage, and truth.

While in large measure realistic, poetry has not cast

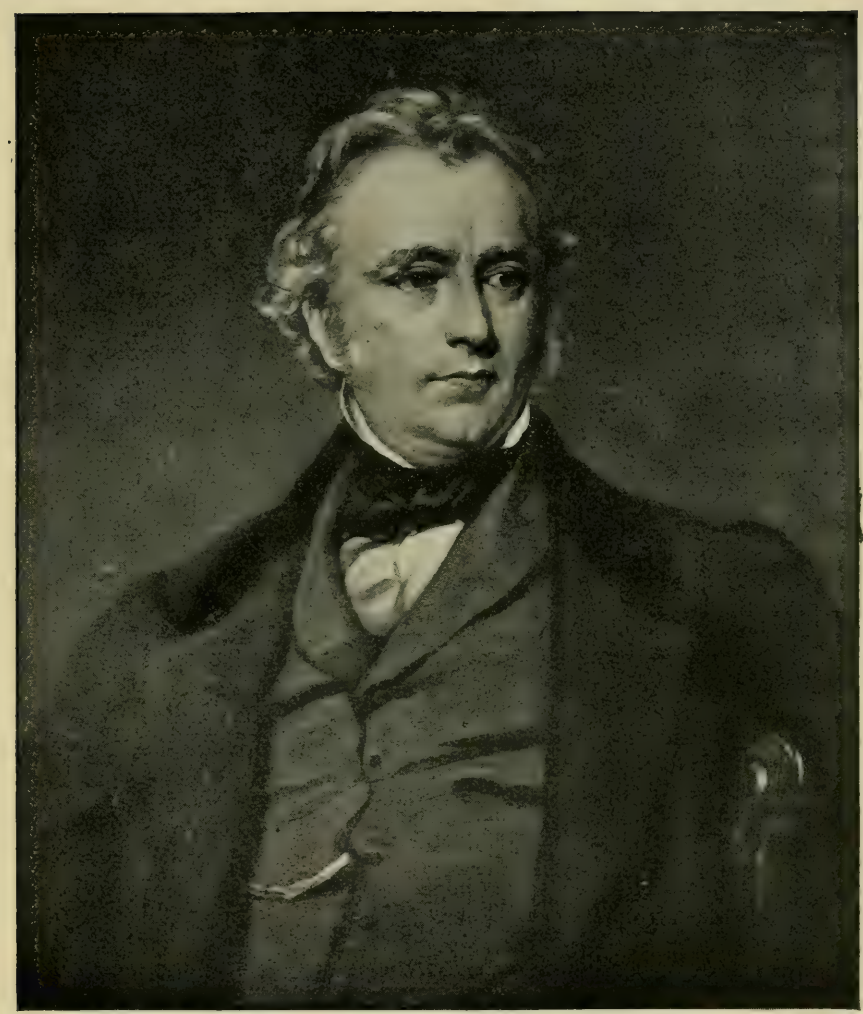
aside its ideal character. Modern progress in culture has placed it on a high vantage ground — far in advance of all the preceding ages; and from this new position its penetrating vision pierces farther into the realms of unexplored and undiscovered truth. With its present expansion in thought and feeling, poetry has naturally assumed new forms. While in dramatic poetry there is a humiliating decay in comparison with the Elizabethan era, yet in lyric, narrative, and didactic poetry we find almost unrivalled excellence. With naturalness of form and expression, there is a careful and conscientious workmanship not found in previous periods.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

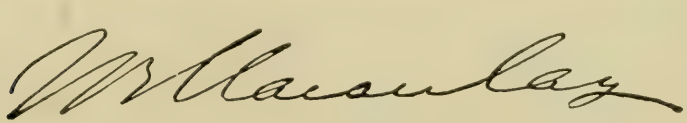
MACAULAY does not belong to the writers who have been obliged to appeal from their own generation to a more discerning posterity. From the time he leaped into prominence by his essay on "Milton" at the age of twenty-five, he has been immensely popular. No other English writer except, perhaps, some of the great novelists, has been more widely read. Though nearly half a century has passed since his death, there is scarcely an abatement of popular interest in his works. His "History of England," his "Essays," and his "Lays of Ancient Rome" find a place in our cheap editions of standard works. In many homes they take their place by the side of the Bible and Shakespeare.

In recent years, through the development of a more chastened style of writing, a noteworthy reaction against Macaulay's fame has been manifest. His faults as a writer, critic, and historian have been pointed out by thoughtful scholars. In some cases, no doubt, the reaction has gone too far, and failed to do justice to his splendid merits. Whatever abatements from a former unqualified laudation a new study of his works may force us to make, surely we shall find abundant reason to vindicate the popular judgment of the past three-quarters of a century, and to assign him a high rank among the writers of the Victorian Age.

Macaulay counted his age by the years of the century,



Engraved by James Faed in 1854 after the painting by Sir Francis Grant, P.R.A.



having been born Oct. 25, 1800, in Leicestershire. He was blessed in his parentage. His father Zachary Macaulay, of Scotch Presbyterian ancestry, was a man of strong character. Though sparing of words, he thought deeply; and he persisted in whatever he undertook with the tenacity of a stern sense of duty. He displayed a reformer's zeal for the abolition of slavery in the British dominions. Macaulay's mother, of Quaker descent, supplied the tenderness and grace that might otherwise have been lacking in the home. She was a mild, affectionate woman; but, at the same time, she had the firmness and the good sense to hold her son in the line of duty and high achievement.

In his childhood Macaulay was regarded as nothing less than a prodigy. He acquired knowledge with astonishing ease and possessed an extraordinary power in casting it into literary form. At eight years he knew Scott's "Marmion" by heart. He produced history, epics, hymns, with surprising facility. But whatever joy these promises of future eminence may have awakened in his mother's breast, she took care not to stimulate his vanity. When he was thirteen, she gave him this sensible advice: "I know you write with great ease to yourself, and would rather write ten poems than prune one. All your pieces are much mended after a little reflection; therefore, take your solitary walks and think over each separate thing. Spare no time or trouble, and render each piece as perfect as you can."

In 1818 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge. He exhibited an intense repugnance to mathematics. "Oh, for words to express my abomination of that science," he wrote to his mother, "if a name sacred to the useful

and embellishing arts may be applied to the perception and recollection of certain properties in numbers and figures!" His dominant taste was for literature. While making excellent attainments in the ancient classics, he extended his reading over a wide field of modern literature. Poetry and fiction especially delighted him. His disposition was amiable and generous; and among his large circle of friends he exercised an almost sovereign sway through his brilliant power in conversation. With his large stores of knowledge and great command of language, he naturally took high rank as a debater.

His literary productions of this period possess unusual interest. They show that his literary faculties matured early, and that his distinctive style was a natural gift. In a prize essay on William III., fragments of which have been preserved, we find the following characteristic passage: "Lewis XIV. was not a great general. He was not a great legislator. But he was in one sense of the word a great king. He was a perfect master of all the mysteries of the science of royalty — of the arts which at once extend power and conciliate popularity, which most advantageously display the merits and most dexterously conceal the deficiencies of a sovereign."

His contributions to Knight's *Quarterly Magazine*, including verse, fiction, and criticism, reveal rare maturity of thought and expression. The poem, "Battle of Ivry," —

> "Now glory to the Lord of Hosts,
> From whom all glories are!" —

is scarcely surpassed by any of his later verse. The "Fragments of a Roman Tale" and "Scenes from the

Athenian Revels" exhibit special gifts in fiction and dramatic dialogue. His study of "Dante" and "Petrarch" show the largeness of method and the wealth of knowledge that characterize nearly all of his literary essays.

In 1825 he began his long series of contributions to the *Edinburgh Review* with his elaborate and well-known essay on "Milton." Though it contained, as he afterward said, "scarcely a paragraph such as his matured judgment approved," it almost took England by storm. It revealed the presence of a new force in literature. It introduced him with great *éclat* to the literary and social circles of the metropolis, where his genial nature and brilliant talk increased his popularity. At this period he was described by Henry Crabb Robinson as a man "overflowing with words, and not poor in thought."

While he was yet at Cambridge, his father lost his fortune in business. This event brought out the sterling side of his character. He received the news of his father's failure with cheerful courage, and surrendering his cherished plans, he bravely undertook the care of the family. "In the course of the efforts which he expended on the accomplishment of this result," says Trevelyan, "he unlearned the very notion of framing his method of life with a view to his own pleasure; and such was his high and simple nature that it may well be doubted whether it ever crossed his mind that to live wholly for others was a sacrifice at all." His conduct in this emergency cannot be too much admired. It shows us that however great as a writer, Macaulay was still greater as a man.

He entered the legal profession in 1826, but he had no liking for law, and got little practice. But his talents

were generally recognized, and a wider career soon opened to him. In 1830 he entered Parliament and speedily took a foremost place. As a Whig, he warmly supported the Reform Bill of 1832. His first speech created little less than a sensation; and afterward, says Gladstone, "whenever he rose to speak, it was a summons like a trumpet-call to fill the benches." His perspicuous thought, his copious diction, and his vigorous utterance all gave him great power as a speaker. He was a hard worker, and throughout his political career he exhibited not only an incorruptible integrity, but also a self-sacrificing devotion to the welfare of his country. During this laborious period, in the spare moments gained by early rising, he wrote some of his best-known essays, among which are "Moore's Life of Lord Byron," "Samuel Johnson," "John Hampden," and "Lord Burleigh."

In 1834 Macaulay sailed for India as legal adviser to the Supreme Council. It was a sacrifice to leave his native country and well-earned fame; but his new office, which paid a salary of ten thousand pounds, brought him the means to provide better for those dependent upon him. He spent the long voyage in reading. "Except at meals," he said, "I hardly exchanged a word with any human being. I devoured Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, French, and English." He was always an insatiable reader; history, travels, novels, poetry — he devoured them all with but little discrimination. He possessed the uncommon faculty of "riding post" through an author; and frequently mastered a volume during a morning's walk. As often happens with far less vigorous minds, books were allowed to take the place of reflection. To

use the words of Gladstone, "He was always conversing or recollecting or reading or composing; but reflecting, never."

Macaulay was a man of strong personality, of great good sense, and of indefatigable industry. In Calcutta, as in London, he accomplished, apart from his special office, a large amount of valuable work. As chairman of the Committee of Public Instruction, he exerted a decisive influence on the educational policy of India. Instead of encouraging Oriental learning, he maintained that "the great object of the British government ought to be the promotion of European literature and science among the natives of India." During his four years' stay in India he wrote only two articles for the *Edinburgh Review;* but one of these was the famous essay on "Bacon."

He returned to England in 1838. He seized upon the homeward voyage as a favorable opportunity to acquire German. "People tell me," he said, "that it is a hard language, but I cannot easily believe that there is a language which I cannot master in four months by working ten hours a day." He pursued the undertaking with his accustomed vigor; and though we may well doubt whether he succeeded in mastering the German language in four months, he made sufficient attainments to read Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing. In his subsequent literary work, he seems to have made but little use of the German.

A few months after his return, he left England for a tour in Italy. His familiarity with Latin and Italian literature prepared him to enjoy in rich measure the historic associations of the country. He was sensitive to architectural beauty, and St. Peter's made a deep impression on

him. "I really could have cried with pleasure," he wrote. He used this journey to verify the local coloring of his "Lays of Ancient Rome." "I then went to the river," he wrote again, "to the spot where the old Pons Sublicius stood, and looked about to see how my 'Horatius' agreed with the topography. Pretty well; but his house must be on Mount Palatine, for he could never see Mount Coelius from the spot where he fought." Accordingly, we read in the poem, —

> "But he saw on Palatinus
> The white porch of his home;
> And he spake to the noble river
> That rolls by the towers of Rome."

While visiting various points of interest in Italy he was meditating his "History of England." With his restless and inexhaustible energy, he soon tired of sight-seeing and longed to be at work again. Considerable time, however, was to elapse before he could give himself fully to his "History." On his return to England, he was elected to Parliament as member for Edinburgh, and shortly afterward entered the cabinet as Secretary of War. Political duties once more absorbed most of his time and effort. But in 1841 a change in the government gave him a welcome release from "that closely watched slavery which is mocked with the name of power." And though at intervals he held a seat in Parliament for the rest of his life, his energies were henceforth chiefly devoted to his literary pursuits.

It is time to consider more fully Macaulay's literary achievements. First in time, and if the popular estimate is to be taken, first in importance, are the "Essays." The

chief of these appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* between 1825 and 1844. They cover a wide field and may be divided into two principal groups, — historical and critical. In English history we have the essays on "Burleigh," "Hallam," "Hampden," "Temple," "Mackintosh," "Walpole," "Chatham," "Clive," and "Warren Hastings," which taken together give a tolerably complete view of the period between Elizabeth and George III. Among the essays treating of continental history, "Machiavelli," "Mirabeau," "Frederic," and above all "Von Ranke," deserve special mention. The critical essays include, as will be seen, a considerable number of the most prominent English writers: "Addison," "Bacon," "Bunyan," "Byron," "Dryden," "Johnson," and "Milton."

These "Essays" were produced in the vigor of early manhood, and most of them under the stress of a busy political life. Instead of constituting Macaulay's main vocation, they were little more than recreations. He wrote, to use his own expression, because his head was full. While lacking in critical acumen, judicial fairness, and indisputable accuracy, they display astonishing resources of diction, unequalled clearness of thought, and a masterful knowledge of history. Any absence of delicacy in touch is amply compensated by a spacious canvas and unstinted color. Macaulay may be fairly styled the Rubens of essayists.

His style, about which so much has been said, is preeminently rhetorical and declamatory. It is better adapted to oral discourse than that of any other English author. It is essentially the same style that appears in his eloquent parliamentary speeches. It abounds in repetitions for the

sake of clearness; in tremendous emphasis of statement; in a luxuriant expansion and illustration of ideas. Though natural to him, it has the appearance of being artificial. It surrenders its flexibility to the demands of a uniform rhetorical movement. It lacks the freedom and melody of the best forms of prose; and in spite of its striking antitheses and its agreeable succession of long and short sentences, there is an unvaried sameness of tone that at length grows tiresome. While in Macaulay's hands it was capable of splendid results, it is not a style to be blindly imitated.

His mind was quick, direct, and vigorous in its operations. It soon caught the main outlines of a subject. With a few prominent points before him, Macaulay proceeded to fill in his picture from the ample resources of his memory and imagination. There is an absence of gentle gradation and subdued tints. But whatever may be lacking in fine discrimination and exquisite delicacy, there is always an unfailing lucidity and impressive power.

These considerations throw light on a serious and acknowledged failing. Macaulay is generally a partisan. While he was thoroughly honest at heart, and while he would have scorned to do any one intentional wrong, yet the clearness and impetuosity of his mental processes sometimes hurried him to unwarranted conclusions. He was deficient in judicial calmness and reserve. Hence, however interesting his treatment, and however imposing his assertions, it must be confessed that his conclusions are not always decisive and final.

Macaulay lacked philosophic depth, but was sensitive to dramatic situation. He delighted in facts rather than in

principles. He preferred to describe events rather than to trace their underlying causes. It may be doubted whether he appreciated the subtile feeling of the finest poetry. In his literary criticism we miss a luminous interpretation of exquisite passages. He frankly admitted that criticisms like Goethe's "Hamlet" or Lessing's "Laocoon" were at once his admiration and despair.

There are noted passages in his "Essays" that might be chosen to illustrate more or less fully the foregoing observations. The famous article on "Bacon" exhibits his lack of judicial fairness. The third paragraph of the essay on "Von Ranke," in which he describes the antiquity of the Roman Catholic Church, shows his wonderful skill in expanding and impressing an idea. His description of the trial of Warren Hastings is a vivid and impressive picture. The following extract from the essay on "Samuel Johnson" will serve to illustrate at once his clearness, his force, his fondness for paradox, his exaggerated emphasis of statement, and his partisan attitude of mind:—

"Many of the greatest men that ever lived have written biography. Boswell was one of the smallest of men that ever lived, and he has beaten them all. He was, if we are to give any credit to his own account or to the united testimony of all who knew him, a man of the meanest and feeblest intellect. Johnson described him as a fellow who had missed his only chance of immortality by not having been alive when the 'Dunciad' was written. Beauclerk used his name as a proverbial expression for a bore. He was the laughing-stock of the whole of that brilliant society which has owed to

him the greater part of its fame. He was always laying himself at the feet of some eminent man, and begging to be spit upon and trampled upon. . . . Everything which another man would have hidden, everything the publication of which would have made another man hang himself, was matter of gay and clamorous exultation to his weak and diseased mind. . . . That such a man should have written one of the best books in the world is strange enough. But this is not all. Many persons who have conducted themselves foolishly in active life, and whose conversation has indicated no superior powers of mind, have left us valuable works. Goldsmith was very justly described by one of his contemporaries as an inspired idiot, and by another as a being —

'Who wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll.'

"La Fontaine was in society a mere simpleton. His blunders would not come in amiss among the stories of Hierocles. But these men attained literary eminence in spite of their weaknesses. Boswell attained it by reason of his weaknesses. If he had not been a great fool, he would never have been a great writer. . . . Of the talents which ordinarily raise men to eminence as writers, Boswell had absolutely none. There is not in all his books a single remark of his own on literature, politics, religion, or society, which is not either commonplace or absurd. . : . Logic, eloquence, wit, taste, all those things which are generally considered as making a book valuable, were utterly wanting to him. He had, indeed, a quick observation and retentive memory. These qualities, if he had been a man of sense and virtue, would scarcely

of themselves have sufficed to make him conspicuous; but because he was a dunce, a parasite, and a coxcomb, they have made him immortal."

Macaulay was not a poet, yet he published a slender volume of poems that have kept their place as a popular favorite. These are the "Lays of Ancient Rome," which were published in 1842. In the preface the author tells us that he speaks, not in his own person, but in the persons of ancient minstrels, who know only what a Roman citizen, born four or five hundred years before the Christian era, may be supposed to have known, and who are in no wise above the passions and prejudices of their age and nation. In this way the legends of Horatius defending the bridge, of the battle of Regillus, of the slaying of Virginia, and of the prophecy of Capys are treated. Macaulay frankly acknowledges his indebtedness to the old English ballad, to Scott, and above all to Homer. He reproduces the heroic spirit, and especially the patriotic devotion of the ancient Roman, in a manner deeply impressive.

It is safe to say that the ballad is the only form of poetry in which Macaulay could have met with success. The ballad does not require the finest emotion nor the deepest thought. It is narrative in form, and its essential elements are clearness, rapidity, and force. In these qualities Macaulay was gifted in an eminent degree. His subjects were happily chosen. In the field of Roman history he was unusually versed, and his visit to Italy enabled him to perfect the topography of his poems. His great mastery of language took away the difficulties of rhyme, and his knowledge of prosody gave an almost faultless correct-

ness to his metre. The "Lays" were kept under the file a long time, and the criticism of scholarly friends was invoked. The simplicity and directness of the language are often admirable, as may be seen from the following stanza in "Horatius," describing the destruction of the bridge: —

"But with a crash like thunder
Fell every loosened beam,
And, like a dam, the mighty wreck
Lay right athwart the stream;
And a long shout of triumph
Rose from the walls of Rome,
As to the highest turret-tops
Was splashed the yellow foam."

As a historian Macaulay is distinctly modern in his aims and methods. Instead of accepting traditional or legendary views, he goes to the original sources of information. Whatever fault may be found with some of his conclusions, his painstaking research is universally acknowledged. He shared the democratic tendency of his age, and in his "History" he attaches importance, not simply to the fate of princes, but also to the life of the common people. "It will be my endeavor," he says in the first chapter of the "History of England," "to relate the history of the people as well as the history of the government, to trace the progress of useful and ornamental arts, to describe the rise of religious sects and the changes of literary taste, to portray the manners of successive generations, and not to pass by with neglect even the revolutions which have taken place in dress, furniture, repasts, and public amusements."

In several of his "Essays" Macaulay has laid down his

theory of history. He would make it a combination of fact and fiction, of poetry and philosophy; yet these elements should be so presented as to make a truthful impression. He would combine the imagination of Scott and the research of Hallam. In his essay on "Machiavelli" he says: "The best portraits are perhaps those in which there is a slight mixture of caricature, and we are not certain that the best histories are not those in which a little of the exaggeration of fictitious narrative is judiciously employed. Something is lost in accuracy, but much is gained in effect. The fainter lines are neglected; but the great characteristic features are imprinted on the mind forever."

He aimed to give his "History of England" the charm of a historical romance. He followed the method of the historical novelist in the minute portrayal of incident, the careful delineation of character, and the dramatic arrangement of his narrative. "I shall not be satisfied," he wrote, "unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the table of young ladies." He realized his aim in producing a wonderfully successful work. But after all, his method, except in narrow limits, is not practicable. Macaulay miscalculated his strength. It has been shown that the completion of his "History" as originally planned would have filled fifty volumes and occupied one hundred and fifty years in composition. His five volumes narrate the events of only sixteen years — from 1685 to 1701.

The "History of England," completed in 1855, exhibits the same general characteristics exemplified in the "Essays." Its style is rhetorical, pellucid, and strong. It

abounds in admirable descriptions of persons, places, and events. It has been styled, not unjustly, a veritable portrait gallery. To use his own language, it invests "with the reality of human flesh and blood beings whom we are too much inclined to consider as personified qualities in an allegory; calls up our ancestors before us with all their peculiarities of language, manners, and garb; shows us over their houses, seats us at their tables, rummages their old-fashioned wardrobes, explains the uses of their ponderous furniture." But, at the same time, it frequently shows a partisan bias. In the multitude of details it sacrifices a true perspective; and throughout it all there is a singular lack of philosophic spirit.

The closing years of Macaulay's life are not free from pathos. He had been a strong man physically, broad-shouldered and stout-limbed. He was blessed with a superabounding energy and spirit that made him the life of every company. But at last, in 1852, he was suddenly stricken with heart disease, which was soon followed by an incurable asthma. Thus to be shorn of his strength was a cruel blow. "I became," he says, "twenty years older in a week."

But his sterling worth never showed itself to better advantage than in the trials of broken health. He sustained his sufferings with a cheerful fortitude. He was faithful in every duty, whether public or private. He never lost his tender consideration for those about him. He faced death calmly, thinking chiefly of the sorrow of those whom he loved. The end came Dec. 28, 1859, and a few days later he was laid to rest in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey. "Absolutely without literary affectation,"

to borrow the words of Justin McCarthy, "undepressed by early poverty, unspoiled by later and almost unequalled success, he was an independent, quiet, self-relying man, who, in all his noon of fame, found most happiness in the companionship and the sympathy of those he loved, and who, from first to last, was loved most tenderly by those who knew him best."

CHARLOTTE BRONTÉ.

Not long since an investigator made an inquiry as to the stature of people of genius. His tabulated statement of measurements indicates that people of genius are generally either below or above the medium height. Whatever may be thought of this conclusion, it is certain that Charlotte Bronté might be adduced in confirmation of its truth. While she was one of the most highly gifted literary women of England, she was diminutive in form and fragile in health. But what she lacked in size and strength, she made up in force of will and persistency of effort. Genius has rarely achieved greater triumphs over unfavorable surroundings.

In her novels she has portrayed her own character with great clearness. Forced by solitude and suffering to prolonged introspection, she acquired a rare self-knowledge. She gazed steadily into the tragic depths of the human soul. She had but a limited acquaintance with literature and society. Her genius was singularly restricted in its materials. Hence her work is largely autobiographical; it is her experience as contemplated in the light of a strong imagination. "Jane Eyre," "Lucy Snowe," and even "The Professor" are Charlotte Bronté herself. She was of delicate mould; and whether she experienced joy or sorrow, it was in an intense degree. What has been said of her last work "Villette" may be justly applied to all her writings: "Out of the dull record of humble woes,



After Chappel. Engraved by S. Hollyer.

Sincerely Yours C. Brontë

marked by no startling episodes, adorned by few of the flowers of poetry, she created such a heart history as remains to this day without a rival in the school of English fiction to which it belongs."

There are few lives that have been so sad. Her history, it has been suggested, ought to be written in tears. Death early robbed her of a mother's care. Her school life, as depicted in the early chapters of "Jane Eyre," was characterized by harsh treatment, insufficient food, and enforced exposure to wet and cold. The dissipated habits of a loved and talented brother brought a constant care and humiliating sorrow. Her life as a governess was scarcely better than a prolonged torture to her sensitive nature. Her efforts to establish a school were an ignominious failure. Yet, in the midst of this clouded existence, her spirit continued to burn with quenchless fire; and out of her bitter trials she wrought a series of works which, by their beauty and depth and power, have gained a permanent place in our literature.

Charlotte Brontë was born Apr. 21, 1816, at Thornton, in Yorkshire. Her father, Patrick Brontë, was an Episcopal clergyman of literary tastes, who was afterward, for more than forty years, settled in the living at Haworth. Though upon the whole an unambitious, estimable man, he was not devoid of eccentricities, and his authority in the home was exercised with severity. Her mother was a sensitive woman, of attractive appearance, and the letters written to her husband before marriage show that she was not without literary ability and culture. She died when Charlotte was five years old, and henceforth there was but little joy in the household.

There were six children in all, Charlotte being the third. The parsonage at Haworth, a sufficiently commodious building, looked out on a graveyard near by and on extensive gloomy moors. The Yorkshire people, whose character is portrayed in "Shirley," are independent, brusque, and thrifty. But, at the same time, they are apt to become obstinate, and when they believe their rights invaded, they do not hesitate to resort to lawless force. In the midst of these cheerless surroundings, and without congenial companionship, the Bronté children were driven back on themselves, and in their thought and manners exhibited an unseasonable maturity. They were grave, silent, studious, beyond their years.

They received instruction from their father, who, along with the usual studies, discoursed to them on the political and religious questions that engaged his attention. They remained ignorant of the usual sports of childhood and never knew how to be merry. In 1824 the four older sisters entered the school for clergymen's daughters at Cowan's Bridge. Owing to their delicate constitution and precocious training, they were ill-adapted to the coarse fare and harsh discipline of the school. Charlotte always maintained the substantial correctness of the description of its brutalities which she has given in "Jane Eyre." The beautiful character of little Helen Burns is a portrait of her oldest sister, Maria. In a few months after entering the school, the two older sisters Maria and Elizabeth died, and Charlotte and Emily were taken home.

For the next six years, dating from 1825, Charlotte remained at home, and, as the oldest of the children living, exercised over them a maternal care. The entire family

had a remarkable penchant for writing, which, apart from the devouring of all sorts of books, constituted their principal amusement. After the domestic cares of the day were over, they were accustomed to assemble in the kitchen, where, seated at one table, they proceeded to compose stories, fairy tales, poems, and dramas. An astonishing amount of this childish manuscript, written in almost microscopic hand, has been preserved, and reveals to us their precocious talents and their imaginative power. Upon the whole, Charlotte seems to have been the most gifted of the children; and it was in the practice of these early years that she acquired the copious vocabulary and forcible style which distinguish her subsequent works.

In 1831 she entered a small boarding-school at Roe Head. Here she passed the next eighteen months in unwonted happiness. "She looked a little old woman," says one of her schoolmates and dearest friends, "so short-sighted that she always appeared to be seeking something, and moving her head from side to side to catch a sight of it. She was very shy and nervous, and spoke with a strong Irish accent. When a book was given her, she dropped her head over it till her nose nearly touched it, and when she was told to hold her head up, up went the book after it, still close to her nose, so that it was not possible to help laughing." She was ignorant of technical grammar and geography; but her knowledge of literature, art, and politics was a matter of general astonishment. With an insatiable thirst for knowledge, she gave herself with great diligence to study. She seemed to grudge the time spent in necessary relaxation and play.

But in spite of her extreme devotion to study, her obliging amiability made her a favorite with her schoolmates, and her gifts in story-telling were a constant source of delight. It was at Roe Head that she found much of the character and incident worked up in "Shirley."

In 1832 Charlotte returned home, where for the next three years she led a life of routine. "In the morning, from nine o'clock till half past twelve," she writes to a friend, "I instruct my sisters and draw; then we walk till dinner-time. After dinner I sew till tea-time, and after tea I either write, read, or do a little fancy-work, or draw, as I please. Thus, in one delightful though somewhat monotonous course, my life is passed." Her reading at this time covered a considerable field. She was exceedingly fond of Scott, in comparison with whose works she esteemed all other novels worthless. Hume and Rollin were her favorite historians. In biography she read Johnson's "Lives of the Poets," Lockhart's "Life of Burns," Moore's "Life of Byron," and Boswell's "Life of Johnson." But her principal authors were the poets, among whom she preferred Shakespeare, Milton, Scott, Byron, and Wordsworth. In the choice of books her rule was, "Adhere to standard authors and avoid novelty."

In 1835, at the age of nineteen, she returned to Roe Head as teacher. Her labors there finally proved too much for her health, and after three years she returned to Haworth. When she had regained her usual strength, she became a governess; but this employment was not suited either to her talents or tastes. She had little tact in amusing or managing children. While possessing uncommon ability in the acquisition of knowledge, she had

no gifts in imparting it. She was not unconscious of her superior endowments; and the supercilious treatment to which she was exposed from unrefined natures was an almost intolerable humiliation.

The next step in her career was a period of study in a boarding-school at Brussels. She had formed the project of opening a school, and in preparation for it, she desired to improve her knowledge of French, especially in its colloquial use. She spent two years in the *pensionnat* of Monsieur Héger, and of her surroundings and experiences she has given a faithful picture in "Villette" and "The Professor." She studied with indefatigable industry; and some French themes, which have been preserved, show not only a remarkable literary ability, but also admirable attainments in the French language. As an ardent Protestant, she freely criticised Roman Catholic institutions. Nevertheless, the private confession to a priest, so graphically detailed in "Villette," was an actual occurrence. The story that she fell in love with Monsieur Héger, to whom she gave lessons in English, and from whom she received instruction in French, is probably without foundation. But there is no question that she greatly admired him; and in "Villette" he is the original of Paul Emanuel.

She returned to England in 1844, and endeavored to carry out her long-cherished purpose to open a school at the Haworth parsonage. Her efforts proved a failure. In spite of earnest efforts to secure pupils, not one ever came. Perhaps it was just as well; for about this time her brother Branwell, a young man of fine natural gifts, began to be a source of anxiety and care. He had fallen into

habits of dissipation; and at last he returned home, where, after causing his father and sisters indescribable humiliation and sorrow, he died in 1848, a victim to opium and whiskey.

But humiliation and sorrow were not sufficient to extinguish the literary impulse and ambition of Charlotte and her sisters, Emily and Anne. Perhaps they had recourse to the pen as a solace in their tribulation. At all events, the sisters discovered, in 1845, the poetic effort to which they had been secretly giving themselves, and, against the advice of friendly publishers, they resolved to risk a volume in print. It was issued at their expense in 1846, under the title, "Poems by Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell." These names were assumed partly to avoid publicity, and partly to escape the prejudice which the sisters believed to exist against female authors. The poetry is scarcely above mediocrity; and, as was to be expected, the volume proved a failure. The leading periodicals treated it coldly; and in spite of advertising, the publisher sold only two copies in a year.

Charlotte and her sisters, however, were not wholly discouraged. They each set about preparing a story in prose, for which alone their talents were suited. Emily wrote "Wuthering Heights" and Anne "Agnes Grey," both of which promptly found a publisher, but on terms somewhat impoverishing to the two authors. Charlotte's story was entitled "The Professor," a delightful book, the characters and incidents of which were taken chiefly from her life in Brussels. Strange to say, it failed, after repeated efforts, to find a publisher, and did not see the light till after the gifted writer's death.

"The Professor," as indeed all of Charlotte Brontë's works, is written in a spirit of realism. She explains the principles that guided her in its composition, as follows: "I said to myself that my hero should work his way through life as I had seen real living men work theirs; that he should never get a shilling he had not earned; that no sudden turn should lift him in a moment to wealth and high station; that whatever small competency he might gain, should be won by the sweat of his brow; that before he could find so much as an arbor to sit down in, he should master, at least, half the ascent of the 'Hill of Difficulty'; that he should not even marry a beautiful girl or a lady of rank. As Adam's son he should share Adam's doom, and drain, throughout life, a mixed and moderate cup of enjoyment." But this realism, which has since so largely dominated fiction, was not at that time acceptable to the public taste, which still demanded what was thrilling, poetic, idealistic.

While "The Professor" was rejected by a succession of publishers, its author's ability did not utterly escape recognition. She was encouraged to try her hand on a "three-volumed novel," and in spite of previous discouragements she resolutely set to work. The result was her masterpiece, "Jane Eyre," which was written in the midst of domestic distractions and sorrows. It appeared in 1847 and at once occasioned a flutter of excitement in the literary circles of London. It was recognized as a work of unusual power; and the timid, patient, determined little authoress awoke to find herself famous.

"Jane Eyre" was published as the work of Currer Bell. The identity of the author at once became a matter of

speculation, and the secret was not discovered till after the publication of her next work. The opinions expressed in the periodicals of the time furnish an amusing illustration of the fallibility of criticism. A distinguished American critic pronounced "Jane Eyre" the work of more than one hand and one sex, and a prominent English woman proved "upon irresistible evidence" that it was the work of a man.

The style exhibits a direct and masculine vigor that places Miss Bronté among the masters of English prose. The leading characters, far from an ideal perfection, are portrayed with a deeply impressive realism. Some of the scenes are intensely dramatic, and the reader is carried forward with eager interest to the close. Unconventional in form and sentiment, its originality gave rise to some carping criticism; and in the preface to the second edition, which was speedily called for, the author took occasion to remind her readers that "Conventionality is not morality. Self-righteousness is not religion. To attack the first is not to assail the last. To pluck the mask from the face of the Pharisee is not to lift an impious hand to the Crown of Thorns." Though not without faults of conception, of taste, and of ignorance, "Jane Eyre" stands as one of the great impressive books of our century.

"Jane Eyre" contains a brave word on the sphere of woman. Miss Bronté was an independent thinker, and she had the courage of her convictions. The agitation of recent years and the ever widening sphere of woman's activity would seem to confirm the truth of the following vigorous passage, which no doubt came as a shock to many a conservative reader on its first appearance: "It

is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity; they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex."

The next work of Miss Bronté was "Shirley," which appeared in 1849. It was written, one might say, in the valley of the shadow of death. Between its beginning and completion, her brother Branwell and her sisters Emily and Anne were called away. Her agony of soul is reflected in its pages. Yet the occupation of writing it was a boon to her. "It took me," she wrote, "out of dark and desolate reality into an unreal but happier region." But it told injuriously on her health. "You can write nothing of value," she said, "unless you give yourself wholly to the theme; and when you so give yourself, you lose appetite and sleep — it cannot be helped."

The characters of "Shirley," as in Miss Bronté's other works, were taken from life. The heroine, Shirley Keeldar, was an idealized portrait of her sister Emily.

Not a few of the most thrilling incidents — the night attack on the mill, the attempted assassination of the owner, the cauterizing of the arm torn by a mad dog — were actual occurrences. The book was a faithful delineation of Yorkshire scenery and Yorkshire character. It was composed with extreme care and was generally regarded as worthy of the author of "Jane Eyre." A few weeks after its publication, she spent some days in London, where among other literary celebrities she met Thackeray, and was "moved to speak to the giant of some of his shortcomings." But her retiring disposition shrank as much as possible from all unnecessary publicity.

As her successive works appeared, she awaited and read with undue interest the reviews published in prominent periodicals. She recognized the superficiality and ignorance displayed in many of them; but, at the same time, her sensitive nature prevented her from rising above them. Like most authors of serious purpose, she highly valued an intelligent and discriminating review. She was ready to avail herself of any suggestions that might improve her work. But then, as now, haste, incompetency, or self-interest frequently stripped criticism of any value whatever.

The next several years were spent chiefly in the solitude of the Haworth parsonage. Feeble health added to her depression of spirits. The principal event to break the monotony of her life was the arrival of the postman. In addition to the letters from admiring readers of her books, she maintained a regular correspondence with a number of friends. She was a charming letter-writer; and the letters preserved for us in Mrs. Gaskell's "Life

of Charlotte Bronté," and still more fully in Shorter's "Charlotte Bronté and her Circle," reveal very fully not only her daily life, but also her character and her opinions on a great variety of subjects. Her genius as a writer was supported by a rare common sense.

She received occasional calls from distinguished visitors, attracted to Haworth by her fame. She made brief visits to the homes of friends or to London; but she never overcame her native repugnance to prominence or publicity. At the request of her publishers, she undertook another work; but, owing to her interrupted health, it progressed slowly. Conscientious in her literary labors, she was satisfied only with the best she could do. Replying to an inquiry of her publishers, she wrote: "It is not at all likely that my book will be ready at the time you mention. If my health is spared, I shall get on with it as fast as is consistent with its being done, if not *well*, yet as well as I can do it. *Not one whit faster.* When the mood leaves me (it has left me now, without vouchsafing so much as a word or a message when it will return), I put by the MS. and wait till it comes back again. God knows I sometimes have to wait long — *very* long it seems to me."

The work in question was "Villette," which was published in 1853 and enthusiastically received. It is based on her Belgian experiences. It is defective in plot, the interest shifting from one set of characters to another. The fate of the hero, Paul Emanuel, is left somewhat ambiguous. But in spite of artistic blemishes, it is delightful for its reality and truth. There are few authors who would have discovered so much interest and character in the everyday life of a boarding-school.

"Villette" was the last of Miss Brontë's works. She was not a prolific author; her literary work is comprised in four volumes written in twice as many years. No doubt her early death cut her off from other literary achievements; but it is questionable whether she would have produced anything to add to her fame had she lived to a ripe old age. In her four novels she pretty thoroughly exhausted the materials at her command. Any subsequent works would probably have lacked in freshness. "Jane Eyre" and "Shirley" embodied her observation and experience in England; "The Professor" and "Villette," not without virtual repetition, reflected her life abroad. Thus, without being voluminous, her writings attained a well-rounded completeness.

Her books do not yield the highest pleasure to those readers who seek in fiction ideal characters and ideal incidents. She is not to be classed with the romantic school of fiction. She adheres closely to reality as she has seen and experienced it. Her books owe their enduring charm to their profound truthfulness. She wrote from the treasures of an acute observation and from the depths of a passionate heart, without concerning herself about conventional forms. Her works, in their depth and sincerity of feeling, appeal to the primal sympathies of human nature.

The sorely tried life of Charlotte Brontë was not to close without a brief taste of happiness. In the evening of her life the sky, for a brief space, became radiant. After rejecting, in her earlier years, several suitors who had been attracted by her rare gifts and noble character, she was married in 1854 to her father's curate, Arthur Bell Nicholls, a man worthy of her esteem and love. In

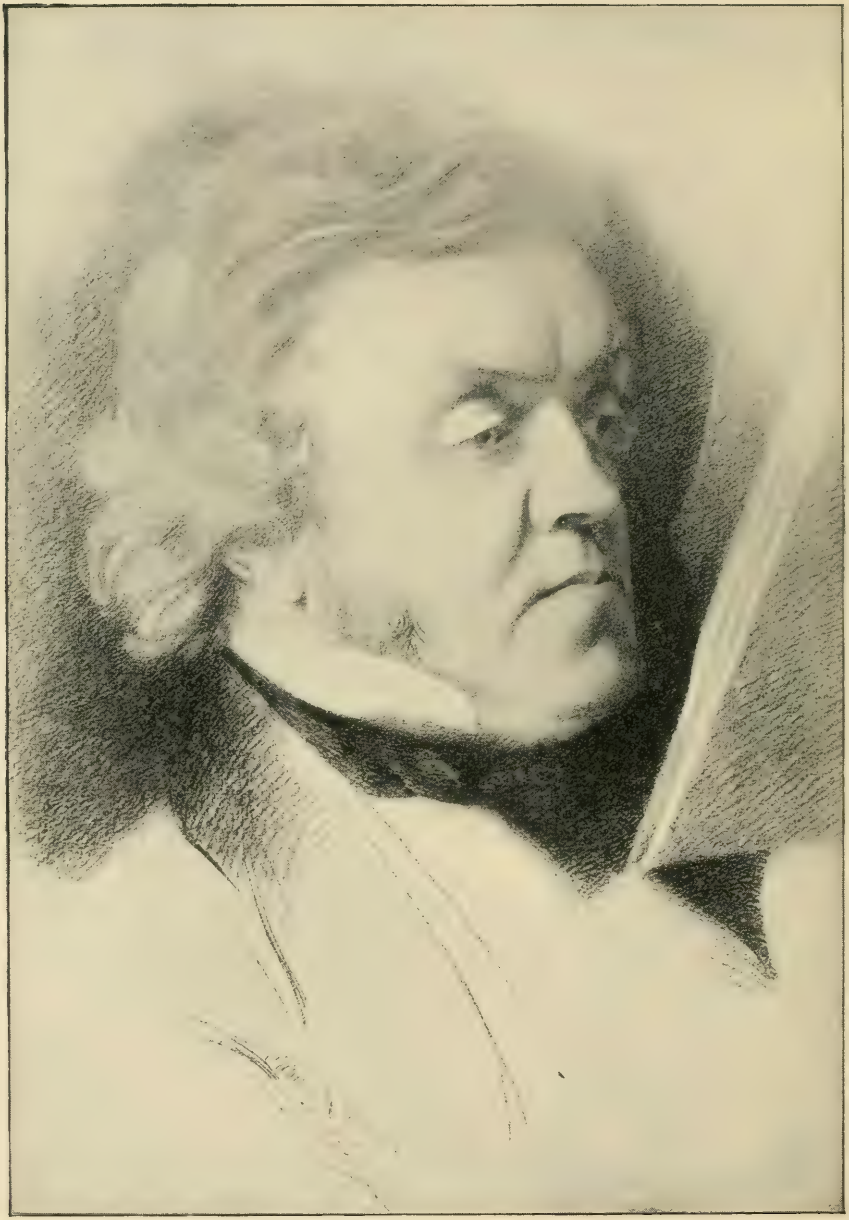
"Shirley," before the days of courtship, she had paid him a tribute in the character of Mr. Macarthey: "He labored faithfully in the parish; the schools, both Sunday and day schools, flourished under his sway like green bay trees. Being human, of course he had his faults; these, however, were proper, steady-going, clerical faults."

Her husband had not loved her for the literary ability she had exhibited or for the literary fame she had achieved. He preferred that she should give up her literary pursuits in her devotion to domestic and social duties. With the self-sacrificing spirit that characterized her whole life, she yielded for a time to her husband's wishes. She assisted him in his parish work and seemed to find a new pleasure in it. But at last the literary impulse became too strong, and she began a new story entitled "Emma," which she did not live to complete.

The months that followed her marriage were the happiest of her life. To use her own words, she did "not want now for kind companionship in health and the tenderest nursing in sickness." A great calm seemed to fall upon her life, and she was observed to exhibit a gentle tenderness not noticeable before. But the larger and happier life upon which she had entered was not to continue. The end came in a few months. Early on the morning of March 31, 1855, the Haworth church bell announced her death to villagers who had known her from childhood and had proudly rejoiced in her success.

"Of the multitude that have read her books," says Thackeray in a generous tribute, "who has not known and deplored the tragedy of her family, her own most sad and untimely fate? Which of her readers has not become

her friend? Who that has known her books has not admired the artist's noble English, the burning love of truth, the bravery, the simplicity, the indignation at wrong, the eager sympathy, the pious love and reverence, the passionate honor, so to speak, of the woman? What a story is that of that family of poets in their solitude yonder on the gloomy northern moors!"



Photograph after painting by Samuel Laurence

W. M. Thackeray

WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY.

MANY parallels have been drawn between Thackeray and Dickens, the two greatest novelists of their day. Both attained great popularity; yet in character, methods of work, and attitude toward life, they were very different. In place of Thackeray's almost feminine timidity, Dickens had a virile self-confidence and determination. In place of Thackeray's distrust of himself and the world, Dickens had an invincible confidence in both. In place of Thackeray's irresolution and unsystematic methods of work, Dickens was resolute and regular in a marked degree. In place of Thackeray's satirical attitude, which made him dwell chiefly on the shams and foibles of life, Dickens dwelt chiefly on the good to be found in human nature, even in its most degraded forms. Of the two, it is needless to say that Dickens has been the more popular; but it would be rash to say that he was the greater intellect or better artist.

The name of Thackeray is an old one in England, traceable beyond the date when French was still the official language of the country. The family seemed to have a talent for religion and many of its members were clergymen in the Established Church. William Makepeace, the subject of this sketch, was born in Calcutta, July 18, 1811, where his father held a position under the Indian government. His mother is spoken of as "one of

the handsomest old ladies in the world." She lived to see her son become distinguished, surviving him by a year.

While a child Thackeray was brought to England, and placed in Charter House School. The head-master was unsympathetic, and its rude manners were distasteful to his sensitive nature. He was not an example of youthful precocity; and though he had some popularity among the boys, he detested the place, and was accustomed for many years to refer to it as Slaughter House. Sparring and cricket seem to have been his principal acquisitions. In his last year at the school he wrote to his mother: "There are but 370 in the school. *I wish there were only 369.*" The only intimation at this time of his literary gifts was found in his faculty for writing humorous verse.

In 1829 Thackeray entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he spent only one year. The glimpses we get of his life there are not displeasing. He was a leading spirit in a literary society, several members of which afterward rose to distinction in the church. He did not distinguish himself in the prescribed studies of the College, but read a great deal in English poetry, and in the old novelists, of whom he chose Fielding as his model. He was sufficiently prominent in social life, giving and receiving his share of dinners. His literary tastes and talents began to manifest themselves more strongly. He was connected with an undergraduate periodical called *The Snob*, for which he wrote a burlesque of Tennyson's prize poem on "Timbuctoo": —

> "In Africa — a quarter of the world —
> Men's skins are black; their hair is crisp and curled;
> And somewhere there, unknown to public view,
> A mighty city lies, called Timbuctoo."

In 1830 Thackeray left Cambridge without a degree; but his sojourn there had not been in vain. Apart from his enlarged acquaintance with books, and his still larger acquaintance with men, he laid there the foundation of his literary taste and style. The loose and romantic manner of Dickens became impossible to him. He developed the severe self-restraint that belongs to the classic spirit. His style is characterized by clearness, flexibility, and force; and it may be fairly claimed that he is the most classic of all our novelists.

After leaving the University, he spent some months in travel on the Continent. He visited Paris, Rome, Dresden, and Weimar, entered largely into the life of the people, and thus broadened his knowledge and his sympathies. He spent several months at Weimar, where he met Goethe. "I think," he wrote in after years, "I have never seen a society more simple, charitable, courteous, gentleman-like, than that of the dear little Saxon city where the good Schiller and the great Goethe lived and lie buried." He preferred Schiller to Goethe, and "believed him to be, after Shakespeare, the Poet." He for a time thought of translating Schiller; but this, like many other great projects of his, was destined not to be realized.

After returning to England, Thackeray began the study of law. As with so many other men of literary instincts, it proved distasteful. He found difficulty in bringing himself down to the necessary toil. In "Pendennis" he has given us a picture of the plodding and the idle law-student, and dwells on the losses and limitations of the diligent toiler. "He could not cultivate a friendship, or

do a charity, or admire a work of genius, or kindle at the sight of beauty or the sound of a sweet song — he had no time and no eyes for anything but his law books. All was dark outside his reading lamp. Love and nature and art (which is the expression of our praise and sense of the beautiful world of God) were shut out from him. And as he turned off his lonely lamp at night, he never thought but that he had spent the day profitably, and went to sleep alike thankless and remorseless." This may be taken as an ingenious defence of his own lack of diligence.

When he became of age, he had a comfortable fortune of twenty thousand pounds and an income of five hundred a year. This he speedily lost, partly through gambling with sharpers, and partly through unfortunate newspaper enterprises. Forced to earn a livelihood for himself, he turned to art and went to Paris to find a home for himself and his mother. He bore his reverses philosophically and afterward turned them to literary account. Writing to his mother in December, 1833, he says: "I have been very comfortably installed in the new house for ten days and like much my little study and airy bedroom. I am sure we shall be as happy here as possible; and I believe that I ought to thank Heaven for making me poor, as it has made me much happier than I should have been with the money." He became an artist of some skill and in subsequent years was accustomed to illustrate his own writings.

But the man who is born to write will write. In a year or two we find him again in London, doing whatever work he could for the papers. In 1835 he is recognized among

the contributors to *Fraser's Magazine*, with which he remained connected for a dozen years. The "Memoirs of Yellowplush," which contains the observations of a footman in many genteel families, appeared in 1837. It is a satire, in which the "orthogwaphy is inaccuwate," but the diction none the less telling. The author's own experience no doubt furnished the basis of the story of Mr. Dawkins, who was fleeced out of his fortune by Mr. Deuceace. There is probably an autobiographic touch in the remonstrance of the footman, who says, when his master, in recognition of his talent, is about to dismiss him: "Don't send me away. I know them littery chaps, and, believe me, I'd rather be a footman. The work's not so hard — the pay is better; the vittels incompyrably supearor."

The next story of any length was "Catherine," which was intended to satirize Bulwer, Ainsworth, and even Dickens for throwing a factitious charm around blackguards and criminals. It is written under the name of Ikey Solomons: "Be it granted, Solomons *is* dull; but don't attack his morality; he humbly submits that, in his poem, no man shall mistake virtue for vice, no man shall allow a single sentiment of pity or admiration to enter his bosom for any character of the piece; it being from beginning to end a scene of unmixed rascality performed by persons who never deviate into good feeling."

But more important than either of the foregoing tales was "The History of Samuel Titmarsh and the Great Hoggarty Diamond," which came out in *Fraser* in 1841. Though it did not attract great attention, and the editor made the disagreeable suggestion that it be curtailed, it

possesses much interest, and illustrates, within brief compass, the leading characteristics of Thackeray's manner. Its main purpose is to expose the villany of bubble companies, and to exhibit the methods by which rural inexperience is imposed upon. It concludes with the sensible advice "never to embark in any speculation, of which the conduct is not perfectly clear, and of which the agents are not perfectly open and loyal."

Other contributions to *Fraser* were, "Fitz-Boodle's Confessions," "Men's Wives," and "Barry Lyndon." They are all satires on the weaknesses, blunders, and sins of life. Thackeray had an almost morbid hatred of humbug and pretentiousness, and was never weary of girding at them. In the first chapter of "Mr. and Mrs. Frank Berry," in "Men's Wives," there is a description of Thackeray's fisticuff at Charter House, which resulted in a broken nose and permanent disfigurement. The most important of this group of works is "Barry Lyndon," in which a sharper, liar, and villain is made to give a memoir of himself. In spite of his unbroken series of villanies, his energy and valor call forth some measure of sympathy.

The consideration of the *Fraser* contributions has carried us far beyond an important event in Thackeray's life. This was his marriage, which took place in 1836. For three or four years he found strength and happiness in his domestic relations. His nature craved woman's tenderness. It was during these years, as we have seen, that he laid the foundations of his great literary fame. Then came a misfortune worse even than death. The health of his wife gave way, and it became necessary to

place her in a private asylum. Henceforth, he worked without the encouragement of a cheerful home and with a heavy sorrow in his heart.

In 1843 Thackeray became connected with *Punch*, to which he contributed for the next nine or ten years. He continued the same admirable vein of satire. The first of his contributions was "The Lucky Speculator" — a servant who, beginning with twenty pounds, acquired a fortune speculating in stocks, and who, in the flood-tide of his prosperity, cut his former friends and affected the fashionable gentleman. The story is told in extracts from his diary. The portrayal of snobbery is admirable. The hero fell in love with a noble lady, Angelina, for whom, as he tells us, his "pashn hogmented daily." "I gave went to my feelings," to quote from the diary, "in the following lines. . . . She was wobbling at the pyanna as I hentered. I flung the convasation upon mewsick; said I sung myself; and on her rekwesting me to favor her with somethink, I bust out with my pom: —

"When moonlike on the hazure seas
In soft effulgence swells,
When silver jews and balmy breaze
Bend down the lily's bells;
When calm and deap, the rosy sleap
Has lapt your soul in dreems,
R Hangeline, R lady mine!
Dost thou remember Jeames?"

Another admirable satire, appearing in *Punch*, was "Novels by Eminent Hands," in which the peculiarities and weaknesses of Bulwer, Disraeli, Cooper, and others are amusingly caricatured. The best of these satires is

"Codlingsby," in which the manner of Disraeli is taken off, and "The Stars and Stripes," in which Cooper's style is imitated. But more important than either "The Lucky Speculator" or "Novels by Eminent Hands" was "The Book of Snobs," which relentlessly pursues snobbery in every class of society. The author professes to have "an eye for snobbery" — a gift for which he felt "an abiding thankfulness." But his satirical vein sometimes carries him too far; and his eye for snobbery was so keen that he occasionally discerned it where it does not exist. Among the most delightful of his burlesques is "Rebecca and Rowena," a sequel to Scott's "Ivanhoe," in which Thackeray corrects what he regarded as the unjust treatment of the Jewish maiden.

The year 1847 marks a turning point in Thackeray's literary career. Up to this time, in spite of the admirable work he had done, he remained comparatively unknown. His great contemporary Dickens had fairly distanced him in popularity and fame. Only a few recognized his exceptional power. He chafed somewhat under this neglect, and thought for a time of working up a reputation through the puffing system; but his sterling sense of honor soon put aside the temptation. "Puffs are good," he wrote to a friend, "and so is the testimony of good men; but I don't think these will make a success for a man, and he ought to stand as the public chooses to put him." But the time had now come for him to receive the recognition to which his brilliant gifts entitled him.

In the year last mentioned, he began the publication of "Vanity Fair" in monthly numbers. After a few months its success was assured. Mrs. Carlyle wrote to her hus-

band after getting the first four numbers, "Very good, indeed; beats Dickens out of the world." The *Edinburgh Review* praised the novel, placing its author among the most remarkable of current writers. But most significant and valuable of all were the words of Charlotte Brontë in her preface to "Jane Eyre." "I think I see in him," she says, "an intellect profounder and more unique than his contemporaries have yet recognized. . . . His wit is bright, his humor attractive, but both bear the same relation to his serious genius that the mere lambent sheet-lightning playing under the edge of the summer cloud, does to the electric death-spark hid in its womb." From this time on he was recognized as a great man and honored by every class of society.

"Vanity Fair," which its author regarded as his best work, is a masterpiece of fiction, though it departs from the usual canons of novel-writing. In his lectures on the "English Humorists," Thackeray said: "I suppose, as long as novels last and authors aim at interesting their public, there must always be in the story a virtuous and gallant hero, a wicked monster his opposite, and a pretty girl who finds a champion; bravery and virtue conquer beauty; and vice, after seeming to triumph through a certain number of pages, is sure to be discomfited in the last volume, when justice overtakes him and honest folks come by their own. There never was, perhaps, a greatly popular story but this simple plot was carried through it." With the audacity of genius, Thackeray departed in "Vanity Fair" from this conventional and popular type. It is a novel without a hero. Though Dobbin has many admirable traits of character, his part

among the *dramatis personæ* is subordinate. Becky Sharp is the heroine; but she is the embodiment, not of all feminine loveliness, but of unprincipled shrewdness.

In constructing a work of fiction, the novelist may adopt any one of three methods: he may describe what is romantic or extravagant in character and incident; he may depict ideal or poetic personages and conditions; or he may adhere strictly to reality, portraying men and events as they actually exist. Thackeray adopted the last method and may be justly regarded as the prince of English realists. At the same time, he did not aim to portray life in its fulness; and with his intense dislike of sham and villany, he made the false and sinful side of society most prominent in his works. In "Vanity Fair" he warns his readers that he is "going to tell a tale of harrowing villany." To many persons it is depressing. We can easily understand why Thackeray's children used to say to him, "Papa, why don't you write books like Mr. Dickens?" But after a large acquaintance with life has taught us something of its shams and villanies, "Vanity Fair" becomes a delightful book, holding the mirror up to the darker side of society.

Thackeray's next great novel was "Pendennis," the first number of which appeared in 1848, a few months after the conclusion of "Vanity Fair." It contains a larger autobiographic element than any of his other writings. Arthur Pendennis, the hero, "is a very good-natured, generous young fellow," he once wrote, "and I begin to like him considerably. I wonder whether he is interesting to me for selfish reasons, and because I

fancy we resemble each other in many points, and whether I can get the public to like him too." It fairly rivals its predecessor in interest. Thackeray was not usually happy in his portrayal of good women. As with Amelia in "Vanity Fair," their goodness is not supported by a corresponding wisdom. But in "Pendennis" we find an exception: Laura Bell is capable and clever as well as good — entirely too bright and good, some persons think, for the very faulty hero, Arthur Pendennis.

In the original preface to "Pendennis" the author defends his realistic method. He mildly censures the public for preferring what is unreal to what is true. He declares that it is not his purpose to idealize his characters with Raphaelistic touches. "You will not sympathize," he says substantially, "with this young man of mine, this Pendennis, because he is neither angel nor imp. If it be so, let it be so. I will not paint for you angels or imps, because I do not see them. The young man of the day, whom I do see, and of whom I know the inside and the out thoroughly, him I have painted for you; and here he is, whether you like the picture or not."

Thackeray has often been accused of being a cynic, but the accusation is hardly just. No one had a kinder heart and a larger charity for the weaknesses of men. While his experience and his observation made him feel keenly the evils in life, he has not portrayed them with the bitterness of the cynic. The closing words of "Pendennis" reveal to us the spirit with which he wrote: "If the best men do not draw the great prizes in life, we know it has been so settled by the Ordainer of the lottery. We own,

and see daily, how the false and worthless live and prosper, while the good are called away, and the dear and young perish untimely — we perceive in every man's life the maimed happiness, the frequent falling, the bootless endeavor, the struggle of right and wrong, in which the strong often succumb and the swift fail; we see flowers of good blooming in foul places, as, in the most lofty and splendid fortunes, flaws of vice and meanness, and stains of evil; and, knowing how mean the best of us is, let us give a hand of charity to Arthur Pendennis, with all his faults and shortcomings, who does not claim to be a hero, but only a man and a brother."

"Henry Esmond," which appeared in 1852, is commonly regarded as the best of Thackeray's novels, though it was rather coldly received at the time of its publication. George Eliot pronounced it an "uncomfortable book," and even Charlotte Brontë thought it contained "too much history and too little story." The author bestowed great labor on "Henry Esmond." The period of the story is the age of Queen Anne, and a number of historical characters, including Steele and Addison, are introduced. The style is in perfect keeping with the times described, and the incidents of the story are so naturally interwoven with the historical events that the earlier half of the eighteenth century is made to live again before us. It is a great historical novel — one of the greatest in our language. The tone of the book is one of disappointment and sadness. "And yet," to use the words of Trollope, "there is not a page in the book over which a thoughtful reader cannot pause with delight. The nature in it is true nature."

Thackeray wrote two other novels that rank among his principal works, "The Newcomes," which appeared in 1855, and "The Virginians," which appeared in 1859. The former is a sequel to "Pendennis," and the latter to "Henry Esmond." "The Virginians" is not a closely woven story, and as a whole is lacking in interest. But "The Newcomes" deserves a place by the side of the author's two or three greatest works. It exhibits his usual melancholy and satirical vein. Colonel Newcome is one of his most admirable creations, and the death-bed scene is a notable passage for its simple pathos: "At the usual evening hour the chapel bell began to toll, and Thomas Newcome's hands outside the bed feebly beat time. And just as the last bell struck, a peculiar sweet smile shone over his face, and he lifted up his head a little, and quickly said, 'Adsum!' and fell back. It was the word we used at school, when names were called; and lo, he, whose heart was as that of a little child, had answered to his name, and stood in the presence of the Master."

Before his last great works were written, Thackeray had taken to lecturing, to which he was impelled not so much by natural inclination as by financial need. He began his career as a lecturer in 1851, with a course of six lectures on "The English Humorists," among whom he included, besides a few others, Swift, Addison, Steele, Pope, and Goldsmith. The subject was a thoroughly congenial one, and the general treatment is sympathetic and delightful. He speaks of the men and their lives rather than of their books, and makes humor mean more than the power of exciting laughter. "The humorous writer," he says, "professes to awaken and direct your love, your pity, your

kindness, — your scorn for untruth, pretension, imposture, — your tenderness for the weak, the poor, the oppressed, the unhappy." In this sense Thackeray himself deserves to rank among the greatest of English humorists.

Unlike Dickens, who was perfectly at ease before an audience, Thackeray was painfully timid. He could not think of appearing in public without trepidation. His first course was attended by the world of fashion. Charlotte Bronté, who was present at the lecture on Congreve and Addison, admirably characterized their matter and delivery: "They are a sort of essays, characterized by his own peculiar originality and power, and delivered with a finished taste and ease, which is felt but cannot be described."

After delivering the lectures in the principal cities of England, Thackeray came to America in the latter part of 1852. He looked at American life with very kindly eyes, and enjoyed, as he wrote, the rush and restlessness. Naturally, the "lion business night after night" became irksome to him; but he was pleased with the enthusiastic reception he generally received. Three years later he visited this country again and delivered his "Four Georges." These lectures are not historical treatises, but personal sketches set in the social life of the times. Filled with striking incident and anecdote, they give an interesting glimpse of the period of the Georges, and were received in America with even more favor than "The English Humorists." They were afterward delivered in the principal cities of England, but with less applause.

Though Thackeray can hardly be regarded as a poet, he was a versifier of uncommon skill. Like his prose works, his poems are mostly humorous and satirical; but

at the same time there is an undertone of seriousness and pathos running through them. The "Sorrows of Werther," a satire on Goethe's romance of the same name, is well known: —

> "Werther had a love for Charlotte
> Such as words could never utter;
> Would you know how first he met her?
> She was cutting bread and butter."

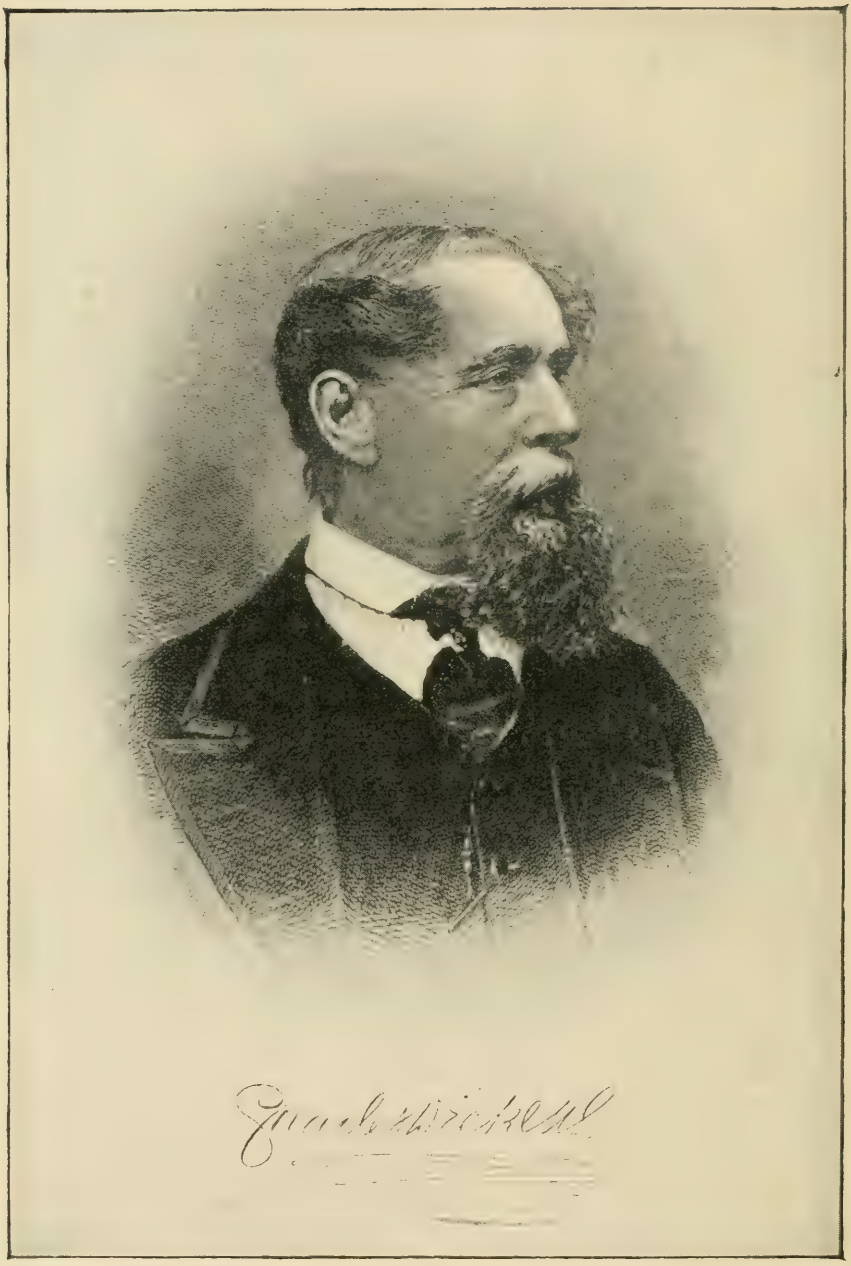
"The End of the Play" is one of the best of his more serious poems, breathing a pathetic sadness. "The Cane-Bottomed Chair" was the author's favorite ballad; but in no other poem has he put so much of his feeling in regard to life as in "Vanitas Vanitatum": —

> "O vanity of vanities!
> How wayward the decrees of fate are;
> How very weak the very wise,
> How very small the very great are!
>
> "Though thrice a thousand years have past,
> Since David's son, the sad and splendid,
> The weary King Ecclesiast,
> Upon his awful tablets penned it,—
>
> "Methinks the text is never stale,
> And life is every day renewing
> Fresh comments on the old, old tale
> Of folly, fortune, glory, ruin."

In 1857 Thackeray made an effort to secure a seat in Parliament, but was defeated. Two years later the *Cornhill Magazine* was established under his editorial management. He gathered about him a large number of able contributors, and the *Magazine* was a success from the

start. More than one hundred thousand copies of the first number were sold. In this periodical appeared the stories of "Lovel the Widower" and "The Adventures of Philip," neither of which is up to the standard of Thackeray's best work. The most interesting of his contributions to the *Cornhill* was the "Roundabout Papers," essays in which his imaginative and moralizing faculties were allowed free play. They are delightful papers, revealing the more playful and amiable side of his nature. There are many autobiographic touches. "Perhaps of all the novel-spinners now extant," he says in playful reference to his manner of writing, "the present speaker is the most addicted to preaching."

Beneath the heavy cares and sorrows of life, Thackeray had aged prematurely. He died on Christmas eve, 1863, and lies buried in Kensal Green Cemetery. A plain stone, bearing his name and the date of his birth and death, marks his resting place; a greater monument is found in his imperishable works. His nature was deeply religious, and he seems to have remained untouched by the doubts so prevalent in this century. He looked upon death as a friend. "A just man summoned by God," he once wrote, "for what purpose can he go but to meet the Divine love and goodness?"



Etching by Samuel Hollyer.

CHARLES DICKENS.

JUST how much a man owes to the age in which he happens to be born, it is difficult to determine. But whatever genius he may possess, it is certain that to a greater or less degree he is influenced and moulded by his surroundings. No account of an author's life and work is complete without a consideration of his environment. This consideration shows us something of the nature of his attainments, the source of his material, and the character of the public he addresses.

Dickens was fortunate in coming upon the stage at an opportune moment. The brilliant Victorian Age had scarcely begun. Shelley, Keats, Byron, Coleridge, Lamb, were names of the past; and that mighty constellation of Victorian writers — Carlyle, Macaulay, Tennyson, Browning, and others — was just appearing above the horizon. In the realm of fiction particularly, there was a void. Scott had lain in his tomb five years; and in spite of the partial success of Bulwer and Disraeli, no one had been found worthy to take his place. At such a time did Dickens appear upon the scene to become for many years the acknowledged prince of novelists.

Charles Dickens, the second in a family of eight children, was born in Portsea, Feb. 7, 1812. His father was at that time a government clerk connected with the Portsmouth dockyard. He was, according to his son's

testimony, industrious and conscientious in the discharge of business, and "as kind-hearted and generous a man as ever lived in the world." But thrift was not one of his virtues. With an increasing family and accumulating debts, he moved to London when his son was two years old, and not long afterward to Chatham. His wife was a woman of some accomplishments, but without much practical wisdom and force of character.

The experiences of the family at this period and after their return to London have been immortalized in "David Copperfield." To have a complete record, it is only necessary to substitute John Dickens for the easy-going Mr. Micawber. Even the "Boarding Establishment for Young Ladies" is not a fiction; but unfortunately for the welfare of the family no pupils ever came, and the house was visited only by a growing number of inexorable creditors. At last the elder Dickens was thrown into the Marshalsea prison for debt, where he moralized in much the same strain as Micawber. With tears he conjured his son "to take warning by his fate, and to observe that if a man had twenty pounds a year for his income, and spent nineteen pounds nineteen shillings and sixpence he would be happy, but that if he spent twenty pounds one he would be miserable."

At Chatham the young Charles had been sent to school, where he showed decided literary tastes. He once said of himself that he had been "a writer from a mere baby, an actor always." His father had collected a little library, in which the precocious boy was able to gratify his taste for reading. He had a greedy relish for books of voyage and travel; but those which exerted the greatest influence

upon him were works of fiction. They appealed to his active imagination. Among the books read at this time were the works of the older novelists: "Roderick Random," "Humphrey Clinker," "Tom Jones," "The Vicar of Wakefield," "Don Quixote," "Gil Blas," and "Robinson Crusoe." He entered into the deepest sympathy with the leading characters, and emulated their deeds of adventure and heroism. It is not strange that thus early he cherished the ambition to become "a learned and distinguished man."

In 1821 the family removed from Chatham to London, and the trials of the young Charles began. The family finances went from bad to worse. At the age of ten the bookish, imaginative boy was placed in a blacking warehouse, where he pasted labels on bottles for six or seven shillings a week. Neglected by his parents, thrown with rude companions, and subject to many hardships, he felt a strong sense of degradation. Years afterward he wrote of this sorrowful time: "How much I suffered, it is utterly beyond my power to tell. . . . I know that but for the mercy of God, I might easily have been, for any care that was taken of me, a little robber or a little vagabond. My whole nature was so penetrated with grief and humiliation of such considerations, that even now, famous and caressed and happy, I often forget in my dreams that I have a dear wife and child, and wander desolately back to that time of my life." But more than he ever realized, perhaps, this experience was valuable to him. Out of the trials of this period he was storing up treasures of character and incident, of which he afterward made golden use.

A fortunate legacy, at the end of a few months, enabled

the elder Dickens to get out of the debtors' prison; and Charles, released by a timely quarrel from the drudgery of the blacking warehouse, was sent in 1824 to Wellington House Academy. It was a school of the old style, which he did so much in later years to render impossible in England. The head-master's chief qualification was dexterity in the use of the cane, and he furnished more than one trait for Mr. Creakle. Charles did not bring away from the school any great store of classic learning. He always lamented his defective education. But without knowing it, he got what for him was better than book learning. He enriched his experience with the humors and characters of the school. Whatever may have been his success as a student, his literary gifts were recognized among his comrades, and he was looked up to as a writer of tales and a leader in amateur theatricals.

His school life lasted only a year or two. It then became necessary for him to think of earning his bread. In 1827 he entered a solicitor's office on a salary of thirteen shillings and sixpence a week. Here he had a new field of observation, which he turned to good account. He not only acquainted himself with the technicalities of courts and law, but also enriched his mind with a store of characters and incidents relating to the legal profession. But his ambition was not satisfied with the drudgery of a clerkship; and at the end of eighteen months, stimulated by the example of his father who had become parliamentary reporter for one of the London papers, he resolved to become a reporter too.

He was at this time about seventeen and characterized by an indomitable will and a determination "if he

did anything at all, to do it with his might." He threw himself into his new career with great energy. Shorthand then, even more than at the present time, was a difficult art, and he spent many weary months in diligent practice before offering himself as a skilled reporter. He soon discovered that his lack of general reading was a serious obstacle to his success, and with dauntless courage he set about supplying this deficiency by constant attendance at the British Museum. Of the many hardships of these days he has given us a charming description in an address delivered at a public dinner some two years before his death. "I have often transcribed for the printer," he said, "from my shorthand notes important public speeches, in which the strictest accuracy was required, and a mistake in which would have been, to a young man, severely compromising, writing on the palm of my hand, by the light of a dark lantern, in a post-chaise and four, galloping through a wild country, and through the dead of night, at the then surprising rate of fifteen miles an hour. . . . Returning home from excited political meetings in the country to the waiting press in London, I do verily believe I have been upset in almost every description of vehicle known in this country. I have been, in my time, belated in miry by-roads, toward the small hours, forty or fifty miles from London, in a wheelless carriage, with exhausted horses and drunken postboys, and have got back in time for publication, to be received with never-forgotten compliments."

We have now reached the time when Dickens at last found his true vocation, for which, unconsciously to himself,

all his previous experience, and particularly his newspaper training, had specially fitted him. In December, 1833, his first literary sketch was "dropped stealthily, with fear and trembling," to use his own words, "into a dark letter-box, in a dark office, up a dark court in Fleet Street." It was accepted, and "appeared in all the glory of print." He was so filled with pleasure and pride, he tells us, in purchasing a copy of the *Magazine* in which it was published, that he went into Westminster Hall to hide the tears of joy that would come into his eyes. The paper which he thus described, was subsequently published in the "Sketches by Boz," as "Mr. Minns and his Cousin."

Encouraged by this success, Dickens continued for the next year or two to write stories and sketches for *The Old Monthly Magazine* and for *The Evening Chronicle*. They were then republished in a volume, for which the author received two hundred and fifty pounds. The "Sketches" reveal the extraordinary power of Dickens as an observer, and contain clear intimations of his future greatness. "London — its sins and sorrows, its gayeties and amusements, its suburban gentilities and central squalor, the aspects of its streets, and the humors of the dingier classes among its inhabitants — all this had certainly never been so seen and described before."

While continuing his duties as reporter, Dickens began the work that was quickly to establish his reputation and to confirm him in a literary career of astonishing fruitfulness and success. In a later preface to the book, he tells us how "Pickwick" came to be written. It was proposed by the publishers that he should write something to accompany monthly illustrations by the caricaturist Seymour.

He consented on condition that he was to have control of the story, and that the illustrations should rise naturally from its characters and incidents. The first number of the "Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club" appeared in March, 1836. At first the success of the story seemed doubtful; but after the fifth number, in which Sam Weller appeared, it grew rapidly in popularity. In a few months the sale of the successive numbers jumped from a few hundred to forty thousand, and "Pickwick" was recognized as the most popular novel of its day.

"Pickwick" has remained one of its author's most popular books. In several particulars it illustrates his peculiar methods and powers. Though possessed of no small degree of dramatic talent, Dickens does not often make use of elaborate plots. He is preëminently a novelist of incident. He places before us graphic scenes rather than profound studies. His characters are vividly drawn, but generally with the exaggeration of caricature. He has a dominant but kindly sense of humor, which, less refined than that of a Lamb or Irving, is exhibited most frequently in absurd characters and ridiculous situations. Besides all this, there is found in "Pickwick" an abounding and contagious vitality, which constitutes one of the great charms of the book.

An etching by Carlyle, who met Dickens at a dinner party, brings before us his personal appearance and manner at this time. "He is a fine little fellow — Boz, I think. Clear, blue, intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arches amazingly, large protrusive rather large mouth, a face of most extreme *mobility*, which he shuttles about — eyebrows, eyes, mouth, and all — in a very singular manner

while speaking. Surmount this with a loose coil of common-colored hair, and set it on a small compact figure, very small, and dressed *à la D'Orsay* rather than well — this is Pickwick. For the rest, a quiet shrewd-looking little fellow, who seems to guess pretty well what he is and what others are."

Two days after the appearance of the first number of "Pickwick" Dickens married Catharine Hogarth, the daughter of a fellow-worker on the *Chronicle*. He began his wedded life modestly, taking his bride to his bachelor quarters in Furnival's Inn, much after the manner of Tommy Traddles in "David Copperfield." But as his income increased, he occupied more comfortable lodgings, till at last he purchased Gad's Hill Place as his permanent home, and so fulfilled a resolution of his ambitious childhood. For a number of years his domestic relations were happy enough. He delighted in his children. "He never was too busy," his daughter tells us, "to interest himself in his children's occupations, lessons, amusements, and general welfare." But later there came an unfortunate change; and after twenty years of wedded life, the unhappy pair agreed to separate. It was a case of incompatibility of temper, which neither had the strength to overcome or the patience to bear.

During the next few years after the success of "Pickwick," the amount of work Dickens accomplished is amazing. While writing the successive numbers of "Pickwick," he assumed the editorship of *Bentley's Miscellany*, and began at once the publication of "Oliver Twist." Early in 1838, and simultaneously with "Oliver Twist," he issued the first numbers of "Nicholas Nickleby." Besides these



DICKENS' HOME — GADSHILL — KENT.

"I write you from my little Kentish country house, on the very spot where Falstaff ran way."

— DICKENS TO JAMES T. FIELDS.

three masterpieces, he wrote several plays, none of which, however, added to his fame. "Oliver Twist," one of the most interesting of our author's works, was written to portray the criminal side of London life. "It appeared to me," he says, "that to draw a knot of such associates in crime as really did exist; to paint them in all their deformity, in all their wretchedness, in all the squalid misery of their lives; to show them as they really were, forever skulking uneasily through the dirtiest paths of life, with the great, black, ghostly gallows closing up their prospect, turn them where they might — it appeared to me that to do this, would be to attempt a something which was needed, and which would be a service to society." It is a strong piece of realism, in which the glamour sometimes thrown around crime is ruthlessly torn away.

"Nicholas Nickleby" was likewise written with a purpose. It was intended to expose the cruelties practised in certain Yorkshire schools, and to awaken sympathy for the unhappy victims. So thoroughly had Dickens acquainted himself with the scene of the story that the original of Dotheboys Hall was identified without difficulty. The book hit its mark, and as a result of the exposures it made, and of the public interest it aroused, the class of schools attacked was in large measure reformed.

His methods of work, as followed at this period, are not without interest. His favorite time for writing was the morning, though when heavily pressed he labored far into the night. He worked with intense concentration. When weary with mental exertion, he sought recreation in abundant physical exercise. At first riding — fifteen miles out and fifteen miles in — was his favorite means, but soon he

became an indefatigable pedestrian and perambulated London in all directions. He frequently walked twenty or thirty miles at a stretch. His favorite time for walking was at night, when the great city seemed to possess a fascination for him. He never grew tired of it, and looked at in this light, the opening pages of "Old Curiosity Shop" have an autobiographic interest.

In 1840 Dickens began the publication of a weekly periodical, *Master Humphrey's Clock*, containing essays, short stories, and miscellaneous papers. It started with a sale of seventy thousand copies. But the public was disappointed, and Dickens saved the enterprise from failure by beginning the publication of "Old Curiosity Shop." The heroine of this novel is Little Nell, the original of whom was Mary Hogarth, a younger sister of the author's wife. She had won a large place in his heart as the ideal of feminine loveliness. Of all the children Dickens has portrayed (and he had a rare sympathy with the humor and pathos of childhood), Little Nell has been the favorite. The pathos of her story has won all hearts; even Jeffrey, the savage editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, paid her the tribute of tears.

After "Old Curiosity Shop" came "Barnaby Rudge," which was published also in weekly instalments in 1841. It is one of the two historical novels which Dickens essayed, the other being "A Tale of Two Cities," which is connected with the French Revolution. Many of the scenes of "Barnaby Rudge" are laid among the No Popery Riots of 1780. It describes these riotous scenes in words of blood and fire. But the book did not afford ample scope for the author's pathos and humor; and, in

spite of its interest, it is generally regarded as one of his least characteristic works.

During this period of great literary activity Dickens's passion for travelling became very strong. While at work he taxed his nervous energies to the utmost, and therefore felt, from time to time, the need of rest and recreation. He also desired, no doubt, to enrich his experience by seeing new countries and new manners. He wandered over nearly every part of England and made trips to the Continent. In 1841 he was invited to Edinburgh, where he was given the freedom of the city and almost overwhelmed with hospitalities. Early the following year, in company with his wife, he embarked for America, where he spent four months in visiting the principal cities. At a great public dinner in New York Washington Irving welcomed him as "the guest of the nation." But the young republic did not make a favorable impression upon him. "It is of no use," he wrote to a friend, "I *am* disappointed. This is not the republic I came to see; this is not the republic of my imagination."

A few months after his return to England he gave the public his impressions of our country in "American Notes," and a year or two later in "Martin Chuzzlewit," one of his strongest books. In spite of the princely reception that had been accorded him, his criticism and satire of American life were severe and unjust. In "Martin Chuzzlewit," in particular, he portrayed some of its cruder features in a harsh and unfriendly spirit, which justly gave offence. Dickens himself afterward recognized the injustice of his attack; and on his second visit to the United States, twenty-five years later, he spoke of the astonishing strides

our country had made in wealth and culture, and acknowledged that his impressions of an earlier time had been extreme and unjust.

During the intervals of "Martin Chuzzlewit" Dickens wrote in 1843 "The Christmas Carol," a story that was at once acknowledged to be a masterpiece. The first edition of six thousand copies was sold on the day of publication. Nothing better of its kind has ever been done. It exhibits our author's great gifts — his humor, his simple pathos, his bright, poetic fancy, and his sympathy with the down-trodden — at their best. The next best of his Christmas stories is "The Cricket on the Hearth."

For some reason Dickens's popularity at this period seemed to wane. There was a large falling off in the sale of "Martin Chuzzlewit"; and as he had been living in a liberal style, he found himself in financial difficulties, from which, to use his own words, he suffered "intolerable anxiety and disappointment." Under these circumstances he resolved to spend some time on the Continent with his family, where he could live more economically; and accordingly, in 1844, he went to Genoa, and afterward visited the other principal cities of Italy. His sojourn abroad was not marked by great literary activity; but the ringing of the numerous bells of Genoa suggested to him the Christmas story called "The Chimes." He returned to London the following year, and became editor of a new daily, *The News*, which has since had a vigorous growth. But the engagement proved a mistake, and after three weeks he tendered his resignation. But he still continued for a time to write for it, and in its columns first

appeared his excellent letters of travel called "Pictures of Italy."

Not long after his release from editorial work, he again went to the Continent, this time establishing himself at Lausanne. At this place, in a villa that did not belie its name of Rosemont, he began another great work, "Dombey and Son." But the grandeur of Alpine scenery could not supply the inspiration that came to him in the metropolis of England. "The toil and labor of writing, day after day," he said, "without the magic lantern of the London streets, is *immense!*" After finishing three parts of "Dombey and Son," he went to Paris, where he spent three months, living on terms of friendly intercourse with Dumas, Hugo, Lamartine, and Chateaubriand. "Dombey and Son" was completed in London and published in 1848. Its purpose is to expose the vice of pride, and in its originality and force it deserves to rank among our author's best works. No small part of its beauty and pathos is due to the character of little Paul.

The five years beginning with 1847 may be reckoned the happiest and busiest of Dickens's life. His inimitable addresses on public occasions brought him into closer relations with the people, while his "splendid strolling" at the head of an amateur theatrical troupe won him fresh applause. As an actor and manager he possessed remarkable ability and was recognized as the life of the whole company. The proceeds of the entertainments given by the troupe were devoted to benevolent objects. In 1850 his long-cherished desire to conduct a successful periodical was realized in *Household Words*. "We hope," he wrote,

"to do some solid good, and we mean to be as cheery and pleasant as we can."

In "David Copperfield," which was completed in 1850, Dickens may be said to have reached the culmination of his career as a writer. In no other work has he attained so high a degree of artistic excellence. Its autobiographic element is an additional source of interest. "Of all my books," Dickens declares, "I like this the best. It will be easily believed that I am a fond parent to every child of my fancy, and that no one can ever love that family as dearly as I love them. But like many fond parents, I have in my heart of hearts a favorite child — and his name is David Copperfield."

We cannot follow Dickens further in his work as a novelist. Other great works were to be produced, — "Bleak House," "Little Dorrit," "Tale of Two Cities," "Our Mutual Friend," and others, — but none of them increased his fame. They lacked, to a greater or less degree, the abounding humor and vitality of his earlier books. His intense and protracted labors, together with domestic discomforts, began to tell on his health. A morbid restlessness came upon him. "I am become incapable of rest," he wrote to a friend. "I am quite confident that I should rust, break, and die, if I spared myself. Much better to die, doing." His roving spirit became stronger than ever; and in 1855, speaking of a contemplated trip, he humorously described himself as "going off, I don't know where or how far, to ponder about I don't know what." The closing years of his life were filled with restless activity.

Though he had previously given readings for benevolent

objects, Dickens began his career as a professional reader in 1858. His readings were eminently successful, adding largely both to his fame and fortune. Wherever he went, large crowds were anxious to see and hear the distinguished novelist. He prepared for his readings with almost infinite care, rehearsing scores of times and studying every intonation and gesture. His flexible voice, his fine personal presence, and above all his unusual dramatic gifts, made his entertainments unique. He was a whole theatre in himself. Carlyle, who once went reluctantly to hear him, felt constrained to say: "Dickens does it capitally, such as *it* is; acts better than any Macready in the world; a whole tragic, comic, heroic *theatre* visible, performing under one *hat*, and keeping us laughing — in a sorry way, some of us thought — the whole night." His readings in America during the winter of 1867–1868 brought him the enormous sum of nearly one hundred thousand dollars.

The last years of his life were marked by failing strength. His reading tours drew heavily upon his physical energies, and a serious railroad accident, in which he nearly lost his life, shattered his nerves. But he toiled on with heroic courage, his indomitable will triumphing over bodily infirmity. Among intimate friends he sometimes exhibited the boyish gayety of earlier years. In the autumn of 1869 he began the novel of "Edwin Drood," which he was destined never to finish. The end came suddenly June 9, 1870, in his home at Gad's Hill. His body was quietly laid to rest in Westminster Abbey, among those who by word and deed have done most to make England and English literature. The last day of his life he wrote: "I have always striven in my writings to express venera-

tion for the life and lessons of our Saviour — because I feel it." In this faith he lived and died.

As a novelist, Dickens followed a large and diffuse method. He lacked the severe self-restraint that belongs to the classic spirit. His scenes and characters are almost exclusively confined to the lower half of society; and when he has attempted to portray a higher type of manhood and womanhood, he has generally failed. But these and other defects that have been pointed out in the course of this sketch are so heavily counterbalanced by prevailing excellences that we can afford to ignore them. In spite of caricature, many of his characters are genuine creations, whose doings and sayings are quoted with the tacit assumption that they are familiar to every one. Who can forget Pickwick, or Mr. Micawber, or Bill Sikes, or a score of others? Dickens is always pure and true in his moral feeling. He never confounds vice and virtue, nor loses sight of the great truth that "the wages of sin is death." He had a wide human sympathy, which discovered, even in the lowest outcast, some remaining spark of goodness. "This humane kinship with the vulgar and the common," says Frederic Harrison, "this magic which strikes poetry out of the dust of the streets, and discovers the traces of beauty and joy in the most monotonous of lives, is, in the true and best sense of the term, Christ-like, with a message and gospel of hope."

We may venture to predict that the future of Dickens is secure. He wished no other monument than his works, and they are likely to prove an enduring one. With the changing taste of each generation, and with the growing intensity of life, he will not be so extensively

read in the future as in the past. Perhaps no other novelist, except Scott, has ever been so popular. But a few of his works, at least, will no doubt continue to live; and a hundred years from now people will laugh over Pickwick and sympathize with David Copperfield.

GEORGE ELIOT.

GEORGE ELIOT did not begin to write novels, upon which her fame chiefly depends, till she had reached the full maturity of her intellectual powers and had garnered a rich store of observation and experience. She was thirty-eight when her first story was published. Her novels do not belong to what she calls, in one of her review articles, "the mind and millinery species," which is described as "frothy, prosy, pious, or pedantic." Gifted with a large and penetrating mind, she was a profound student of the human soul; and few other writers, even among the very greatest, have sounded lower depths. She was deeply impressed by the ethical significance of life, and everywhere discerned the same tragedy of hunger and labor, sin and suffering, love and death. Unlike the silly novelists whom she criticised in the article referred to, she chose to portray ordinary life in its deeper thought and feeling; and her method, to express it in a single phrase, is that of *psychologic realism*.

Mary Ann Evans (for George Eliot was but her *nom de plume*) was born in Warwickshire, Nov. 22, 1819. Her mother was an earnest-minded woman, solicitous for the moral and religious welfare of her children, and endowed with a notable readiness and sharpness of tongue. Her father, a farmer and surveyor, was a man of sound judgment and wide reputation for integrity of character.



George Eliot

"He raised himself from being an artisan," says his daughter, "to be a man whose extensive knowledge in very varied practical departments made his services valued through several counties." The local scenery familiar to her in childhood she has accurately depicted in "Scenes from Clerical Life" and in "The Mill on the Floss."

In her earliest school days she cared but little for books. She and her brother Isaac, who furnish the prototypes of Maggie and Tom Tulliver in "The Mill on the Floss," were always together. But after her tenth or twelfth year, she became fond of her studies and developed an unusual capacity for acquiring knowledge. She became a great reader and eagerly devoured Scott, Lamb, and Defoe. In a letter written in 1838, she speaks of a serious fault into which her thirst for knowledge had betrayed her: "I am generally in the same predicament with books as a glutton with his feast, hurrying through one course that I may be in time for the next, and so not relishing or digesting either."

At Coventry she spent three years in a school that was pervaded by a deeply religious atmosphere. This influence, together with the religious training of her home, left a deep impression on her character. She devoted much time to works of charity, visiting the poor and providing for their needs. After the death of her mother, in 1836, the care of her father's house fell upon her. She became an adept in butter-making, stood "sentinel over damson cheese and a warm stove," and disciplined her fingers to the skilful use of the needle.

But with all her charitable and domestic duties, she still found time for reading and study. She familiarized her-

self with no fewer than six languages, namely, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, Italian, and German. Her reading covered a wide field. In a letter written in 1839 she says: "My mind presents an assemblage of disjointed specimens of history, ancient and modern, scraps of poetry picked up from Shakespeare, Cowper, Wordsworth, and Milton; newspaper topics; morsels of Addison and Bacon, Latin verbs, geometry, entomology, and chemistry; reviews and metaphysics, all arrested and petrified and smothered by the fast-thickening anxiety of actual events and household cares and vexations." With untiring diligence she laid a broad foundation for her subsequent work.

From letters written at this period of her life, we get a clear insight into the peculiar temperament and character of George Eliot. She was distrustful of self, felt a continual need of sympathy, and longed to be helpful to others. "In her moral development," says her husband and biographer Cross, "she showed, from the earliest years the trait that was most marked in her through life, namely, the absolute need of some one person who should be all in all to her, and to whom she should be all in all. Very jealous in her affections, and easily moved to smiles or tears, she was of a nature capable of the keenest enjoyment and the keenest suffering; 'knowing all the wealth and all the woe' of a preëminently exclusive disposition. She was affectionate, proud, and sensitive in the highest degree."

In 1841 George Eliot's father moved to Foleshill, on the outskirts of Coventry. This turned out an event of great importance in her life. Here she made the acquain-

tance of the Brays, whose house was a centre for the radical literary and religious thought of that region. Emerson, Froude, and other men of mark were guests from time to time. In this atmosphere of free-thinking and scepticism George Eliot abandoned the religious beliefs of her earlier years and, with something of a proselyte's zeal, attacked the current theology and its representatives. For a time her religious convictions remained unfixed; she passed from rationalism to pantheism, and finally settled down into a religion of toleration and humanity. She rejected all supernaturalistic belief and maintained that the supreme duty of life is to do good to our fellow-men.

In 1873, when on a visit to Cambridge, she gave full expression to the beliefs of her later years. "I remember," says Mr. Frederick Myers in a passage of great beauty, "how, at Cambridge, I walked with her once in the Fellows' Garden of Trinity on an evening of rainy May; and she, stirred somewhat beyond her wont, and taking as her text the three words which have been used so often as the inspiring trumpet-call of men, — the words God, Immortality, Duty, — pronounced with terrible earnestness how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third. Never, perhaps, have sterner accents affirmed the sovereignty of impersonal and unrecompensing Law. I listened, and night fell, her grave, majestic countenance turned toward me like a sibyl's in the gloom; it was as though she withdrew from my grasp, one by one, the two scrolls of promise, and left me the third scroll only, awful with inevitable fates. And when we stood at length and parted, amid that columnar circuit of the forest trees, beneath the last

twilight of starless skies, I seemed to be gazing, like Titus at Jerusalem, on vacant seats and empty halls — on a sanctuary with no Presence to hallow it, and heaven left lonely of a God."

At an early age George Eliot showed an inclination for writing. In 1840 a poem of hers was published, and soon afterward she engaged in preparing a chart of ecclesiastical history. But her first important literary work was a translation of Strauss's "Leben Jesu," the purpose of which was to eliminate the miraculous element of the Gospel narrative. It required more than two years to complete the task, which at length grew irksome by reason of her serious disagreement at times with the German theologian. She received but little money for her labor, but the work of translation was helpful in disciplining her faculties into scholarly accuracy of thought and expression.

In 1849 her father died. She felt his loss most keenly, and a week after the funeral sought relief in a trip to the Continent. She visited France and Italy and then took up her abode in Geneva. She lodged in the house of Albert Durade, a humpbacked artist of great refinement, who probably suggested Philip Wakem in "The Mill on the Floss." His portrait of George Eliot is the most pleasing likeness of her that we possess. Her health was not good, but she continued her indefatigable reading and study. "I take walks," she wrote, "play on the piano, read Voltaire, talk to my friends, and just take a dose of mathematics every day to prevent my brain from becoming quite soft." Her sojourn at Geneva marks a turning-point in her life; for henceforth we find greater fixity of purpose and deeper consciousness of power.

After an absence of eight months, she returned to England and shortly afterward became associate editor of the *Westminster Review*. The choice and arrangement of articles fell chiefly upon her. She complained of the heavy burden of her editorial work, which left her but little time for writing. She prepared only a few articles, — "Worldliness and Other-Worldliness," "German Wit," "Evangelical Teaching," and others, — which exhibit much learning and force; but there is sometimes a lack of judicial calmness and tolerant amiability. She had not yet learned the broad sympathy and large tolerance that belonged to her later life.

Her connection with the *Westminster Review* brought her into contact with some of the ablest advanced thinkers of her time. Among her friends she numbered Carlyle, Harriet Martineau, Lewes, Herbert Spencer, and others. Herbert Spencer, with whom her relations were very cordial, was the first to discover her genius for fiction. A still deeper attachment sprang up between her and George H. Lewes, a man of bright and genial nature, whose wife had abandoned him. When he found it impossible to secure a divorce, George Eliot entered into a conjugal relation with him without the usual sanction of church and state. This bold and irregular step cost her the respect and confidence of many friends. But leaving aside its unfortunate irregularity, the union turned out singularly helpful and happy; and in the confidence and encouragement of her husband George Eliot found a much needed stimulus in her work.

Immediately after their union, in 1854, the venturesome pair went to Germany, where they spent eight months at

Weimar and Berlin in congenial studies. After returning to England George Eliot continued her review writing. In an article entitled "The Natural History of German Life," she laid down the realistic principle that was afterward to govern her own artistic productions. "Art is the nearest thing to life; it is a mode of amplifying experience and extending our contact with our fellow-men beyond the bounds of our personal lot. All the more sacred is the task of the artist when he undertakes to paint the life of the people. Falsification here is far more pernicious than in the more artificial aspects of life. It is not so very serious that we should have false ideas about evanescent fashions, about the manners and conversation of beaux and duchesses; but it *is* serious that our sympathy with the perennial joys and struggles, the toil, the tragedy, and the humor in the life of our more heavily laden fellow-men should be perverted and turned toward a false object instead of the true one."

The time had now come for her to enter upon a wider literary career and to exemplify her profound conceptions of the novelist's art. For years she had cherished the purpose of trying her hand at fiction. She was encouraged by Lewes to begin, though he was not entirely confident of her success. "You have wit, description, and philosophy," he used to say to her, "and these go a good way toward the production of a novel. It is worth while for you to try the experiment." In the fall of 1856 she wrote "Amos Barton," the first story in "Scenes of Clerical Life." The scenery, incidents, and characters were taken from her childhood recollections. The story was sent to Blackwood, who enclosed a check for fifty guineas.

"It is a long time," he wrote, "since I have read anything so fresh, so humorous, and so touching." Very sensitive to praise or blame, George Eliot felt encouraged by the success of her first venture, and soon added to the same series "Mr. Gilfil's Love Story" and "Janet's Repentance."

In "Scenes from Clerical Life" we discover the distinguishing features of George Eliot's work. Lacking in dramatic power, she aimed at a truthful portrayal of character rather than an exciting train of incident. She is a novelist of the soul, as Dickens is of manners. The prevailing tone of her work is one of sadness. Weakness, error, and sin are allowed, as in actual life, to bring forth failure and suffering. The background of her own nature was shrouded in gloom. Though her sceptical opinions are carefully repressed, they cast a shadow over her work; and with one or two exceptions we are apt to rise from a perusal of any of her books with a feeling of depression.

She was content to reveal the tragic joys and sorrows hid beneath the surface of everyday life. "These commonplace people," she said in defence of her chosen characters, "many of them, bear a conscience, and have felt the sublime prompting to do the painful right; they have their unspoken sorrows and their sacred joys; their hearts have perhaps gone out toward their first-born, and they have mourned over the irreclaimable dead. Nay, is there not a pathos in their very insignificance — in our comparison of their dim and narrow existence with the glorious possibilities of that human nature which they share?"

In writing fiction George Eliot had at last found her vocation, and in this fact she experienced a satisfaction unknown before. Her domestic life was happy, and

henceforth her career is one of stately grandeur. Her new-found contentment is reflected in her letters, and the last night of 1857 she wrote in her journal: "My life has deepened unspeakably during the last year; I feel a greater capacity for moral and intellectual enjoyment, a more acute sense of my deficiencies in the past, a more solemn desire to be faithful to coming duties, than I remember at any former period of my life."

Scarcely were the "Scenes from Clerical Life" finished, when George Eliot nerved herself for a stronger flight. She set to work on "Adam Bede" late in 1857, continued it during a pleasant sojourn of some months in Germany, and completed it in England in November, 1858. It was published the following year, and rarely has any book created so great a sensation in the literary world. Charles Reade pronounced it "the finest thing since Shakespeare"; Charles Buxton quoted it in Parliament; Herbert Spencer said that he felt the better for reading it. No fewer than eighteen thousand copies were sold the first year, and George Eliot suddenly found herself in the forefront of English novelists.

Though not, perhaps, the greatest of her novels, yet "Adam Bede" has remained the most popular. Like "Scenes from Clerical Life," the book was based on the experiences of her early life. She wrote it with more ease and pleasure than any of her other works. Usually her books cost her great travail of soul. "My books are deeply serious things to me," she wrote shortly after the appearance of "Adam Bede," "and come out of all the painful discipline, all the most hardly learned lessons, of my past life." The sad story of Hetty was a true one, which she

had heard from her aunt in youth. The manly Adam was an idealization of her father, while her mother furnished some of the traits of the inimitable Mrs. Poyser. The saintly Dinah was a portrait of her aunt, who in her earlier womanhood had been a vehement preacher or exhorter.

Her next book, completed and published in 1860, was "The Mill on the Floss." It contains a larger autobiographic element than any of her other works. It was written under more than usual depression of spirit. "I am assured," she wrote to Blackwood, "that 'Adam Bede' was worth writing — worth living through long years to write. But now it seems impossible to me that I shall ever write anything so good and true again. I have arrived at faith in the past, but not at faith in the future." The result did not justify her misgivings. Though inferior to "Adam Bede," "The Mill on the Floss" is still a piece of deep, strong work.

In 1860, after the publication of "The Mill on the Floss," George Eliot spent several months in Italy. She visited the principal cities and studied their works of art. She was especially interested in Florence, which suggested to her an undertaking in a new field. "When we were in Florence," to use her own words, "I was rather fired with the idea of writing a historical romance — scene, Florence; period, the close of the fifteenth century, which was marked by Savonarola's career and martyrdom. Mr. Lewes has encouraged me to persevere in the project, saying that I should probably do something in historical romance rather different in character from what had been done before."

But before this idea was carried out, another English story intervened. This was "Silas Marner," the most ar-

tistic, perhaps, of all our author's works. Not so lengthy as her other novels, it is more rapid in movement and symmetrical in form. For the first time in her writings, imagination takes the place of reminiscence. Though serious, as are all her books, it is less depressing than most of them. It is lighted up with many a touch of humor, and ends with wedding bells. The transformation in Silas Marner's character, through his love for the little waif that had stolen into his cottage, is something that is beautiful in itself and full of promise for humanity.

With "Silas Marner" off hands, George Eliot at once set about her historical novel. With a genuine artist spirit she gave herself to conscientious preparation for it. "I will never write anything," she said, "to which my whole heart, mind, and conscience don't consent, so that I may feel that it was something — however small — which wanted to be done in this world, and that I am just the organ for that little bit of work." For the sake of local coloring, she again spent some weeks in Florence; and for the sake of historical truth she carried on a comprehensive course of reading. Two hundred volumes, it has been said, contributed of their treasures to "Romola." The book drew heavily on the author's vital energies. "I began it a young woman," she said; "I finished it an old woman." After nearly two years of self-distrusting labor, it was completed in 1863; and the first right of publication was sold to the *Cornhill Magazine* for seven thousand pounds.

"Romola" is one of the greatest of historical novels. It reproduces with wonderful power the stirring scenes and interests of the close of the fifteenth century. The

newly awakened ardor for classical learning is strongly shown in the blind old Bardo. Romola is no less noble in soul than beautiful in person; and the ideals she cherished may be regarded as those of George Eliot herself. Listen, as she speaks to her son Lillo, who has just revealed his desire for fame and happiness: "It is only a poor sort of happiness that could ever come by caring very much about our own narrow pleasures. We can only have the highest happiness, such as goes along with being a great man, by having wide thoughts and much feeling for the rest of the world as well as ourselves; and this sort of happiness often brings so much pain with it that we can only tell it from pain by its being what we would choose before everything else, because our souls see it is good. There are so many things wrong and difficult in the world that no man can be great — he can hardly keep himself from wickedness — unless he gives up thinking much about pleasure or rewards, and gets strength to endure what is hard and painful."

After the completion of "Romola," George Eliot rested more than a year. She was now living in a commodious and attractive home; and much sought after by friends and by persons attracted by her reputation, she gave more time to social duties and enjoyments. Her weekly receptions were attended by many distinguished men and women. Gossip and scandal had no place in these gatherings. "She always gave us of her best," says Oscar Browning, who knew her well. "Her conversation was deeply sympathetic, but grave and solemn, illumined by happy phrases and by thrilling tenderness, but not by humor. Although her features were heavy and not well

proportioned, all was forgotten when that majestic head bent slowly down, and the eyes were lit up with a penetrating and lively gaze. She appeared much greater than her books. Her ability seemed to shrink beside her moral grandeur."

After publishing "Felix Holt," one of her least successful novels, she gave herself earnestly to the completion of a poem, "The Spanish Gypsy," which she had begun a year or two previously. Among several trips to the Continent during this period, she visited Spain, where the scene of her poem was laid. With her usual conscientiousness, she made extensive studies in Spanish history and Spanish literature. The subject of the poem was a noble conception, presenting the tragic conflict between individual and tribal claims. But the truth must be told: in spite of her elevated thought, keen insight, and often eloquent utterance, George Eliot was not a poet. Though "The Spanish Gypsy" was received with favor on its publication in 1868, helped no doubt by the author's great reputation as a novelist, it is rather tedious reading now.

Of her other poems, though a fine passage is to be met with here and there, it is not necessary to speak. The best of them, really a little gem, is as follows: —

"Sweet evenings come and go, love,
They came and went of yore;
This evening of our life, love,
Shall go and come no more.

"When we have passed away, love,
All things will keep their name;
But yet no life on earth, love,
With ours will be the same.

"The daisies will be there, love,
The stars in heaven will shine;
I shall not feel thy wish, love,
Nor thou my hand in thine.

"A better time will come, love,
And better souls be born;
I would not be the best, love,
To leave thee now forlorn."

But little space is left for the remaining works of our author. "Middlemarch" was published in 1872 and "Daniel Deronda" in 1876. The rank these works hold among her writings is a disputed point; but the fact seems to be that, with less of popular interest, they exhibit greater depth and breadth of thought. There are not a few who regard "Middlemarch" as the greatest of her works. In "Daniel Deronda" she shows her sympathy with the Jews, to whom, she maintained, the Western people, who have adopted Christianity, owe a peculiar debt. But however great these books may be, their depth and seriousness will prevent them from being general favorites.

In 1878 her husband Lewes died. Notwithstanding her great grief, she at once set about editing his works; and to perpetuate his memory, she established a scholarship, open to students of either sex, for original investigation in physiology. This shows her attitude toward the higher education of women. She wished them to be educated equally with men, seeing in this higher culture a better preparation for the duties of life. "It was often in her mind and on her heart," says Cross, her best biographer, "that the only worthy end of all learning, of all science, of all life, in fact, is, that human beings should

love one another better. Culture, merely for culture's sake, can never be anything but a sapless root, capable of producing at best a shrivelled branch."

Her second marriage in 1880 to Mr. John Cross, a man twenty years her junior, naturally provoked a good deal of criticism. It was a severe shock to those who were disposed to idolize her. But she did not long survive to lament the alienation of friends, or to enjoy what she called a "renewed interest" in life. On the 22 of December, 1880, seven months after her marriage, she quietly passed away, leaving a vacancy in the world of letters that has not since been filled.

Though destitute of many feminine graces, George Eliot was a woman of extraordinary intellectual power. Her literary gifts reach the high plane of genius. Her writings were the product, not merely of studious preparation and tremendous toil, but also of that deeper self, which lies beyond all scrutiny and understanding. In her best work she was guided by a spontaneous and controlling impulse, which lay beyond the reach of her will. "She told me," says Cross, "that in all that she considered her best writing, there was a 'not herself' which took possession of her, and that she felt her own personality to be merely the instrument through which this spirit, as it were, was acting." To a greater or less degree, this is true of all real genius.

In her life she made grave mistakes, and suffered much; but in all her trials of body and soul, she never lost her nobility of purpose nor her sympathy with burdened, struggling humanity. The deep purpose of her life she has beautifully expressed in one of her poems: —

"May I be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony,
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty —
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world."

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

The present century has produced many female writers of high excellence. They are represented in almost all departments of literature, but notably in poetry and fiction. This result has been brought about by the larger culture which is now open to women. They have risen to the demands of a larger sphere of thought and action. Among our great female writers, Mrs. Browning occupies a foremost place. She is beyond question the greatest poetess of England, and, as many believe, of the world. What other poetess deserves a place beside her? In genuineness of inspiration and in vigor of thought, she stands above all her sister singers.

Her life, as we shall see, was not without great trials. Most persons would have been crushed by them. But, as part of her endowment of genius, she had an indomitable energy; and, as often happens, her sufferings but deepened and ennobled her character. She experienced and believed, what another poet has said: —

> "These severe afflictions
> Not from the ground arise,
> But oftentimes celestial benedictions
> Assume this dark disguise."

Suffering gave depth of insight and emotion to her song. But better than her poetry, with all its excellence, was the brave, pure, noble womanhood that stood behind it.

Elizabeth Barrett was born in the county of Durham,



Photograph after the painting by Field Telfourd.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

March 6, 1806. Her ancestors lived for a long time in the island of Jamaica, from which her father was taken to England in his childhood. When she was two or three years old, the family removed from the north of England to Herefordshire, where she grew to womanhood. In one of her letters, written in 1843, she has given us a picture of these years, which were filled with the English poets, Latin and Greek classics, and ambitious efforts at verse. "Most of my events," she says, "and nearly all my intense pleasures have passed in my *thoughts*. I wrote verses — as I dare say many have done who never wrote any poems — very early; at eight years old and earlier. But, what is less common, the early fancy turned into a will, and remained with me, and from that day to this poetry has been a distinct object with me — an object to read, think, and live for. And I could make you laugh, although you could not make the public laugh, by the narrative of nascent odes, epics, and didactics crying aloud on obsolete muses from childish lips."

Besides Byron and Coleridge, she delighted in Pope's "Homer," which at the age of eleven or twelve inspired an epic of four books entitled "The Battle of Marathon." Proud of his daughter's precocity, Mr. Barrett, who at this time possessed considerable wealth, had fifty copies of this epic printed for private circulation. At seventeen or eighteen she wrote a didactic poem called an "Essay on Mind." "The poem is imitative in form," she wrote in after years, "yet is not without traces of an individual thinking and feeling — the bird picks through the shell in it." Recalling the omnivorous reading of those days, she wrote in "Aurora Leigh" many years afterward: —

"We get no good
By being ungenerous, even to a book,
And calculating profits — so much help
By so much reading. It is rather when
We gloriously forget ourselves, and plunge
Soul-forward, headlong, into a book's profound,
Impassioned for its beauty and salt of truth, —
'Tis then we get the right good from a book."

Her thirst for Greek literature was first awakened by Pope's translations. After acquiring the elements of the language, she pursued a wide course of reading under the judicious guidance of Hugh Stuart Boyd, an eminent scholar who had lost his sight. She read to him the principal Attic poets, and also the —

"Noble Christian bishops
Who mouthed grandly the last Greek."

In "Wine of Cyprus" she has preserved a beautiful picture of those youthful studies: —

"And I think of those long mornings
Which my thought goes far to seek,
When, betwixt the folio's turnings,
Solemn flowed the rhythmic Greek:
Past the pane the mountain spreading,
Swept the sheep-bell's tinkling noise,
While a girlish voice was reading,
Somewhat low for *ai*'s and *oi*'s."

In 1832 Mr. Barrett again moved his family, this time to Sidmouth, in Devonshire. The house was comfortable and cheerful, commanding a view of the sea in front. Miss Barrett had now reached maturity in character and culture. None of her predecessors had laid so broad a

foundation for genius to build upon. Her new home, with its agreeable surroundings, proved favorable to literary effort. Before the year had elapsed, she made a translation of "Prometheus Bound," which was published soon afterward with a few original pieces. The translation, which had been prepared in twelve days, was not a success. The translator herself said years afterward that "it should have been thrown into the fire — the only means of giving it a little warmth." In 1845 it was replaced by the present admirable translation found in Mrs. Browning's works.

The family residence at Sidmouth did not prove a permanent one. In 1835 Mr. Barrett took his family to London. For the ambitious poetess this was an important change. It brought new friends and larger opportunities. Unfortunately her health, which had suffered from an accident years before, gave way in the London atmosphere, and her prolonged invalid life had its beginning. But her energy could not be quenched. In her invalid seclusion, as one of her friends testified, she read "almost every book worth reading in almost every language, and gave herself, heart and soul, to that poetry of which she seemed born to be the priestess." Cut off in large measure from social enjoyments, she began the voluminous correspondence which gives her an honorable place among English letter-writers.

She now entered upon a larger literary career by publishing in the *New Monthly*, then edited by Bulwer, the beautiful but sad "Romaunt of Margret." It is a story of love and despair. Its form and tone may be judged by the last of its twenty-seven stanzas: —

"Hang up my harp again!
I have no voice for song.
Not song, but wail, and mourners pale,
Not bards, to love belong.
O failing human love!
O light, by darkness known!
Oh false, the while thou treadest earth!
Oh deaf beneath the stone!
Margret, Margret."

This was followed several months later by "The Poet's Vow," pitched in the same melancholy key, but wrought out with rich fancy and deep feeling. It teaches the lesson that we cannot cut ourselves loose from our kind and renounce our humanity. This self-sufficiency is not possible even to the angels: —

"The self-poised God may dwell alone
With inward glorying;
But God's chief angel waiteth for
A brother's voice to sing;
And a lonely creature of sinful nature,
It is an awful thing."

In 1838 Miss Barrett appeared before the public in a volume entitled "The Seraphim and Other Poems." The time was favorable. The great poets of the earlier part of the century — Scott, Byron, Shelley, Coleridge — had finished their work. Tennyson was but exercising himself in metrical effects, and Browning had only given intimations of his power. The volume met with an encouraging reception. The critics recognized the author's poetic ability. Her genius was pronounced "of a high order"; she was declared to possess "many of the highest qualities of

the divine art." But the praise was tempered with no little censure; she was charged with mannerism, a lack of taste, and obscurity of style. "The Seraphim" is a lyrical drama, of which the *dramatis personæ* are two seraphs, standing first on "the outer side of the shut heavenly gate," and then in "mid-air above the Jordan." The theme is ambitious; and while its lyrical excellence is readily recognized, it is obviously beyond the reach of human genius. Among the other poems printed in this volume "Cowper's Grave" has been justly admired.

In 1838 the state of Miss Barrett's health became so alarming that her physician recommended a warmer climate. Accordingly she went to Torquay, a watering-place on the south coast of Devonshire. She was accompanied by her brother Edward, who had been her favorite companion from childhood. Notwithstanding her continued physical weakness, her tireless intellect was engaged in literary labors and ambitious literary schemes. Among the poems dating from this period is "Crowned and Buried," a strong and elevated tribute to the first Napoleon. But her stay here was destined to have a mournful end. Her brother, with two companions, was drowned. She was prostrated by the dreadful shock; and henceforth Torquay, with its horrible associations, became intolerable to her sensitive nature.

In 1841 she returned to her father's house in London, where her life for the next five years was that of a confirmed invalid. The greater part of the year she was confined to her room, and it was only on warm summer days that she could venture out of the house at all. Only a few intimate friends were permitted to see her. But

under these unfavorable conditions she carried on her literary work. In 1842 she published in the *Athenæum* a series of papers on the Greek Christian poets, and a few months later a series on the English poets. She continued her studies in Greek literature, and among other things read Plato entire in the original.

The year 1844 was an important epoch in the life of Miss Barrett. She published two volumes of poetry, which established her fame on a permanent basis. Shortly before this Tennyson and Browning had published some of their best-known work; but these volumes placed her by the side of these masterful intellects. She took her place as the first of English poetesses. Blackwood, in an elaborate review, declared that "her genius is profound, unsullied, and without a flaw."

These two volumes of 1844 contain some of Miss Barrett's most popular work. "The Drama of Exile" refers to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. It contains passages of striking thought and lyrical beauty, though as a whole it is too remote from human experience to become widely popular. The following lines may be taken as expressing the author's fundamental view of life: —

"Live and love,
Doing both nobly, because lowlily;
Live and work, strongly, because patiently!
And, for the deed of death, trust to God
That it be well done, unrepented of,
And not to loss. And thence with constant prayers
Fasten your souls so high, that constantly
The smile of your heroic cheer may float
Above all floods of earthly agonies,
Purification being the joy of pain!"

"A Vision of Poets," which contains a brief characterization of the principal Greek, Roman, Italian, French, and English bards, abounds in deep thought. The moral of the poem, which the author herself had learned by experience, is contained in the last stanza: —

> "'Glory to God — to God!' he saith,
> *Knowledge by suffering entereth,*
> *And life is perfected by death.*"

"The Romaunt of the Page" and the "Rhyme of the Duchess May" are ballads of deathless love. "The Dead Pan" is a noble song, which recognizes the fact of human progress: —

> "Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
> Sung beside her in her youth,
> And those debonair romances
> Sound but dull beside the truth.
> Phœbus' chariot course is run:
> Look up, poets, to the sun!
> Pan, Pan is dead."

"The Sleep," with its refrain, —

> "He giveth his beloved sleep," —

is a poem of sweet comforting power. But the most popular of all was the romantic, unconventional "Lady Geraldine's Courtship." It was hastily written to swell the first volume to the requisite number of pages, the last hundred and forty-seven lines being written in a single day. In spite of Lady Geraldine's infatuation, the hero seems wanting in true manliness of feeling and conduct.

The volume in question did more than establish Miss

Barrett's fame. In "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" she had made a graceful reference to Browning. This led to an acquaintance, which speedily ripened into love. In view of her invalid condition, she for a time rejected his suit. Her conduct exhibited the highest degree of unselfishness. But at length, when her health had become better, she consented to marriage, which took place Sept. 12, 1846. Owing to Mr. Barrett's unreasonable objection to the marriage of his children, the ceremony was clandestine. Though her father never forgave her, the results amply justified her independent course. In all the annals of literature, there is scarcely a record of a happier union. A week after the marriage, the couple started to Italy, which, for the rest of her life, was to be Mrs. Browning's home.

In one of her letters she has told the story of her courtship and marriage, in a straightforward way; but the deepest and truest record of her inner life during that period is found in her "Sonnets from the Portuguese." They were not written for the public; and it was not till some months after her marriage that they were shown to her husband. He at once pronounced them "the finest sonnets written in any language since Shakespeare." They embody Mrs. Browning's best work, and rank in the very forefront of English love poems. The first of the series is regarded by Stedman as the best sonnet in our language:—

"I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young;

And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw in gradual vision, thro' my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,
'Guess now who holds thee?' 'Death,' I said.
But then
The silver answer rang, 'Not Death, but Love.'"

After spending a few months in Pisa, the poet pair, in 1847, took up their residence in Florence, where they rented, and tastefully furnished, rooms in the Casa Guidi. Though they were frequently on the wing, especially in the hot summer months, they looked upon the "City of Flowers" as their home. Their days passed in quiet happiness. "I can't make Robert go out a single evening," Mrs. Browning wrote, "not even to a concert, nor to hear a play of Alfieri's, yet we fill up our days with books and music (and a little writing has its share), and wonder at the clock for galloping."

In 1851 Mrs. Browning published her "Casa Guidi Windows," a poem in two parts, in which she gives her impressions of contemporary political events in Italy. As a thoughtful woman of wide sympathies, her interest extended beyond the narrow confines of her household, though the advent of a son early in 1849 had awakened a wealth of maternal affection. Like her husband, she was strongly democratic in her sympathies and ardently longed for the freedom of her adopted country. The deep interest with which she followed the rapid succession of

events at this critical period, is shown in her letters. The first part of "Casa Guidi Windows," which was written in 1848, gives expression to her hopes and aspirations. She bravely urges the struggle for liberty: —

"The world shows nothing lost;
Therefore not blood. Above or underneath,
What matter, brothers, if ye keep your post
On duty's side? As sword returns to sheath,
So dust to grave; but souls find place in heaven.
Heroic daring is the true success,
The eucharistic bread requires no leaven;
And, though your ends were hopeless, we should bless
Your cause as holy. Strive — and having striven,
Take for God's recompense that righteousness."

The second part of "Casa Guidi Windows" is filled with disappointment over the failure of the Italian struggle for liberty. Mrs. Browning did not belong to the timid souls that love peace "at any price": —

"I love no peace which is not fellowship,
And which includes not mercy. I could have
Rather the raking of the guns across
The world, and shrieks against heaven's architrave;
Rather the struggle in the slippery fosse
Of dying men and horses, and the wave
Blood-bubbling."

But in her disappointment over actual results, the poet did not lose hope. She held that an aspiring people cannot be permanently kept down, and that, therefore, the independence of Italy was only a question of time. The poem closes in this hope, which was realized only a few years later: —

"We will trust God. The blank interstices
Men take for ruins, he will build into
With pillared marbles rare, or knit across
With generous arches, till the fane's complete."

In 1851, the year "Casa Guidi Windows" appeared, the Brownings spent some months in England and France. In both London and Paris they met the most distinguished literary people of the day. From their apartments on the Avenue des Champs Élysées in Paris, they witnessed some of the exciting scenes of the celebrated *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon. Unlike her husband, Mrs. Browning had unbounded confidence in his ability, integrity, and patriotism.

At this period Mrs. Browning became deeply interested in spiritualism. She attended spiritualistic *séances* and was deeply impressed by a sense of mystery. She attached more importance to the fact of spiritualistic revelations than to the matter of them, which she recognized as often trivial or false. They seemed to give, what her soul greatly longed for, an indisputable evidence of individual immortality. Her husband did not share her belief; and spiritualism is the only subject on which they ever had any serious disagreement. Her letters of this period contain a good deal about spiritualism; and whatever may be thought of her credulity, we must admire the courage with which she defended her convictions and championed an unpopular belief.

In 1855 the Brownings made a second visit to England and France, carrying with them a considerable body of manuscript. During their stay in London we get interesting glimpses of Tennyson, Ruskin, Carlyle, and others.

"One of the pleasantest things," wrote Mrs. Browning, "which has happened to us here is the coming down on us of the Laureate, who, being in London for three or four days from the Isle of Wight, spent two of them with us, smoked with us, opened his heart to us (and the second bottle of port), and ended by reading 'Maud' through from end to end, and going away at half-past two in the morning. If I had had a heart to spare, certainly he would have won mine. He is captivating with his frankness, confidingness, and unexampled *naïveté!* Think of his stopping in 'Maud' every now and then — 'There's a wonderful touch! That's very tender. How beautiful that is!' Yes, and it *was* wonderful, tender, beautiful, and he read exquisitely in a voice like an organ, rather music than speech."

During her stay in London Mrs. Browning completed her longest and, after the "Sonnets from the Portuguese," her best poem, "Aurora Leigh." It is a novel in verse; but it moves on a high plane of thought and feeling. It was published in 1856; and so rapid was its sale that a second edition was called for in a fortnight. Beyond any other of her works "Aurora Leigh" presents her thoughts on art and life. She had a high conception of the poet's office. She calls poets —

> "The only truth-tellers now left to God,
> The only speakers of essential truth,
> Opposed to relative, comparative,
> And temporal truths; the only holders by
> His sun-skirts, through conventional gray glooms;
> The only teachers who instruct mankind,
> From just a shadow on a charnel-wall,
> To find man's veritable stature out,
> Erect, sublime — the measure of a man."

Here is her conception of art: —

"What is art
But life upon the larger scale, the higher,
When, graduating up in a spiral line
Of still expanding and ascending gyres,
It pushes toward the intense significance
Of all things, hungry for the Infinite?
Art's life; and when we live, we suffer and toil."

She had no sympathy with what has since become the naturalistic school of writing: —

"Natural things
And spiritual, who separates these two
In art, in morals, or the social drift,
Tears up the bond of nature, and brings death,
Paints futile pictures, writes unreal verse,
Leads vulgar days, deals ignorantly with men,
Is wrong, in short, at all points."

These extracts must suffice to illustrate the thought and manner of the poem. The story itself is unconventional, but somehow the leading characters and incidents fail to awaken anything like breathless interest.

The year "Aurora Leigh" was published, the Brownings returned to Italy. In spite of her gradually failing health, Mrs. Browning took an intense interest in the political movements of 1859, when, through the aid of Louis Napoleon, Victor Emmanuel succeeded in driving the Austrians from Italy and in effecting the union and independence of the country. In 1860 she published, in England, a small volume entitled "Poems before Congress," in which she presented various incidents and phases of the Italian question. Two of the poems, "Napoleon III. in Italy" and "Italy and the World," contain exalted passages: —

"The soul of a high intent, be it known,
Can die no more than any soul
Which God keeps by him under the throne;
And this, at whatever interim,
Shall live, and be consummated
Into the being of deeds made whole.
Courage, courage! happy is he
Of whom (himself among the dead
And silent) this word shall be said:
'That he might have had the world with him,
But chose to side with suffering men,
And had the world against him when
He came to deliver Italy.
Emperor
Evermore.'"

"A Curse for a Nation" is a severe arraignment of the American people for their toleration of slavery. Singularly enough, on its appearance it was applied to England and denounced as unpatriotic. Mrs. Browning received all the adverse criticism of the "Poems before Congress" with becoming equanimity. She had not written them for glory. "In printing the poems," she wrote to the editor of the *Athenæum*, "I did not expect to help my reputation in England, but simply to deliver my soul, to get relief to my conscience and heart, which comes from a pent-up word spoken or a tear shed. Whatever I may have ever written of the least worth, has represented a conviction in me, something in me felt as truth."

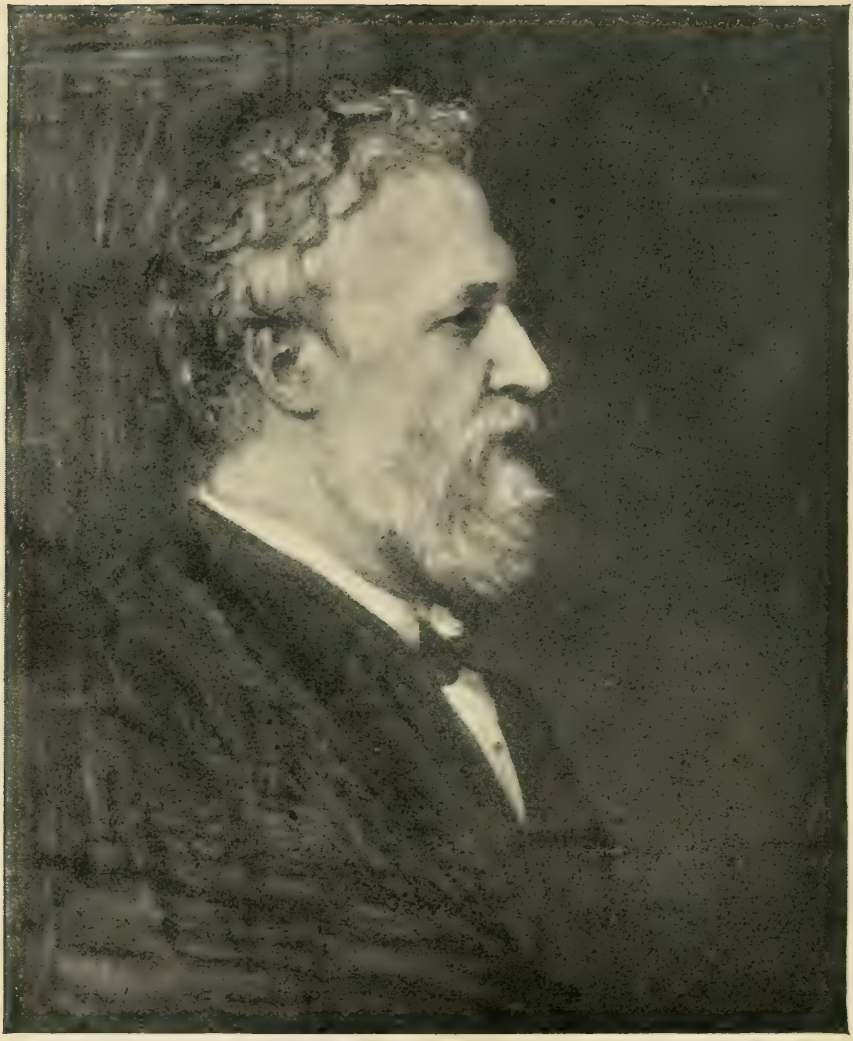
The lung trouble from which Mrs. Browning had long suffered reached its culmination in Casa Guidi, June 29, 1861. Mr. Browning has given a touching account of the last moments of her life: "She smiled as I proposed to

bathe her feet, 'Well, you *are* determined to make an exaggerated case of it!' Then came what my heart will keep till I see her again and longer — the most perfect expression of her love to me within my whole knowledge of her. Always smilingly, happily, and with a face like a girl's, and in a few minutes she died in my arms, her head on my cheek. These incidents so sustain me that I tell them to her beloved ones as their right; there was no lingering nor acute pain nor consciousness of separation, but God took her to Himself as you would lift a sleeping child from a dark, uneasy bed into your arms and the light. Thank God!" She was buried in Florence, the city she loved so well.

A study of her life shows that she was one of the noblest of women. She is to be numbered with those choice spirits who show us by example how excellent a thing life may be made. In her delicate frame and gentle ways there dwelt heroic qualities of mind and heart. She was the friend of truth and humanity. She did not trim her utterance to suit popular feeling. To her truth was sacred; and whatever message the muse brought her, she uttered fearlessly. Her works breathe an unwavering trust in God and immortality.

Her poetry is the sincere utterance of her soul. The nobility of her nature and the extent and refinement of her culture lift it above the commonplace in thought and expression. Conforming her practice to her theory, she let the spirit of each piece determine its form. She handles with ease difficult stanzaic forms. She was a patient, conscientious worker; and her defective rhymes, which critics have magnified, were less the result of carelessness

than of an unfortunate theory, which was to give greater freedom to English versification. In her earlier poems there is, perhaps, a measure of diffuseness; and throughout her literary career she remained romantic rather than classic in her genius and art. But in spite of all defects, she justly merits Stedman's eulogy as "the most inspired woman of all who have composed in ancient or modern tongues, or flourished in any land or time."



Photograph after the painting by G. F. Watts.

Robert Browning.

ROBERT BROWNING.

Robert Browning was strikingly original in his poetry and paid the penalty of originality. He developed a new vein in English literature; he set himself to explore the mysterious workings of the soul. He descended to greater depths than our poetical literature had before reached. Finding the conventional style of poetry unsuited to his purpose, he invented new forms. He devised the dramatic monologue, in which various states of the soul, in relation to outward circumstances, are powerfully portrayed. But this departure from conventional form did not at once find popular favor. Indeed, the public seemed for a time to resent this innovation; and so, like many other great original characters, he was slow in gaining recognition. Almost a half century of abundant labors elapsed before he reached what not a few regard as a foremost place among English poets.

Browning's poetry is not easy reading. Say what enthusiastic disciples may, he is often obscure. Scarcely any of his poems yield up the fulness of their treasures before a third reading. There is a rapidity of thought and violence of transition that frequently make him difficult to follow. His unnatural omission of the relative pronoun and of the sign of the infinitive often make it hard to determine the grammatical relations of his words, and many of his allusions are beyond the range of even highly culti-

vated people. In many of his more important pieces he cannot be understood without study, and often prolonged and severe study. But after we have once become familiar with his peculiarities of method and style, much of what was before regarded as obscure becomes perfectly clear.

The work of a great author has more in it than his conscious thought and emotion. It stands in definite relation to his era. No one can wholly divorce himself from the period in which he lives. Inevitably we partake of the culture, the manners, and the tendencies of our time. A great writer, and particularly a great poet, is apt, above all other men, to be sensitive to his environment, and thus becomes, to a greater or less degree, an incarnation of the spirit of his age. Without intending to do so, Dante gives us a picture of the spirit and thought of his day. The Greek dramatists unconsciously exhibit the culture and beliefs of the Age of Pericles. And in like manner, in the works of Browning and Tennyson, we see the breadth of culture, the spirit of inquiry, the wrestling of beliefs, and the introspective habits of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Robert Browning was born at Camberwell, a suburb of London, May 7, 1812. His father was a man of vigorous constitution and scholarly taste; and for rare books he had, it is said, "the scent of a hound and the snap of a bulldog." With a passion for reading, he was strangely indifferent to what are known as "creature comforts"; and his daughter declared that the announcement "There will be no dinner to-day," would only have elicited the placid reply, "All right, my dear, it is of no consequence."

Browning's mother was described by Carlyle as "the true type of a Scottish gentlewoman"; and another said that she had no need to go to heaven, because she made it wherever she was. But she transmitted to her son a nervous constitution which, however helpful to his poetic sensibilities, added to his physical discomfort in the latter years of his life.

As a child Browning was remarkably active, restless, precocious. To calm his restlessness, his mother was accustomed to tell him stories, and in this manner he was made familiar with the leading characters and incidents of the Bible, and his religious nature was more than usually developed. He was sent to a neighborhood school, where he easily outstripped his companions. He was extremely fond of reading, and found in his father's large library ample opportunity to gratify his tastes. Among the poets he especially admired Byron; and at the age of twelve he is said to have written a volume of poems, which showed the influence of his master.

His youthful period was one of singular unrest. For a time he passed under the influence of Shelley and imbibed some of the radical tenets of "Queen Mab." Instead of attending one of the great public schools, he studied at home under private instructors. He acquired a good knowledge of French, and enriched his store of information by copious miscellaneous reading. For a short time he attended London University, but omitted logic and mathematics from his course of study. He gave himself seriously to the study of music, in which, as is apparent from his works, he made unusual attainments. In his eighteenth year he determined to adopt poetry as

his vocation, a choice which was willingly acquiesced in by his father. As a preliminary step to this calling, he read and digested the whole of Johnson's "Dictionary" — a fact that in a measure explains his almost unequalled mastery of the resources of our language.

In 1833 Browning published his first poem "Pauline." Though in after years he spoke of it slightingly, it was a remarkable production for a young man who had not yet attained his majority. To a few discerning readers, among them John Stuart Mill, it gave promise of great things. Both in its melody and imagery it contains a perceptible echo of Shelley; but at the same time it reveals not a few of the author's distinguishing characteristics. The poem at first appeared anonymously; and it is a remarkable tribute to its excellence that D. G. Rossetti, meeting with it the first time in the British Museum, made a full copy of it. The poem is largely autobiographical and contains many fine passages. The following lines reveal the poet's passion for music: —

> "For music (which is earnest of a heaven,
> Seeing we know emotions strange by it,
> Not else to be revealed) is as a voice,
> A low voice calling fancy, as a friend,
> To the green woods in the gay summer time:
> And she fills all the way with dancing shapes
> Which have made painters pale, and they go on
> While stars look at them and winds call to them
> As they leave life's path for the twilight world
> Where the dead gather."

There are but scant records of the poet's life at this period. In 1834 he went with the Russian consul-gen-

eral, who had taken a great liking to him, to St. Petersburg, where he spent three months. The following year he published his poem "Paracelsus," which shows a marked advance in maturity of thought and style as compared with "Pauline." It is a free, imaginative treatment of the historic Paracelsus, who flourished as a famous alchemist and physician at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Somewhat like Goethe's "Faust," the poem presents to us the eager aspirations, the daring efforts, and the ultimate failure of a soul in the pursuit of superhuman knowledge. In the preface to the first edition, the author states the fundamental principle of his dramatic pieces. "Instead of having recourse," he says, "to an external machinery of incidents to create and evolve the crisis I desire to produce, I have ventured to display somewhat minutely the mood itself in its rise and progress, and have suffered the agency by which it is influenced and determined, to be generally discernible in its effects alone, and subordinate throughout, if not altogether excluded." This principle is so pervasive in Browning's poetry that it should be clearly understood.

Browning was an idealist. In a scientific and materialistic age, he proclaimed the fact and worth of intuitive knowledge. He placed the seer above the investigator. His idealism is presented in a beautiful passage in "Paracelsus": —

> "Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
> From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
> There is an inmost centre in us all,
> Where truth abides in fulness; and around,
> Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,

This perfect, clear perception — which is truth,
A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
Blinds it, and makes all error; and, to *know*,
Rather consists in opening out a way
Whence the imprisoned splendor may escape,
Than in effecting entry for a light
Supposed to be without. Watch narrowly
The demonstration of a truth, its birth,
And you trace back the effluence to its spring
And source within us; where broods radiance vast,
To be elicited ray by ray, as chance
Shall favor."

Though "Paracelsus" was coldly received by the public, it attracted the attention of a select few and introduced the poet to a distinguished literary circle. Among his acquaintances at this period were Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, Monckton Milnes, Dickens, Landor, and Wordsworth. But no one exerted a more important influence on him than the popular actor Macready, who had been greatly impressed by "Paracelsus." "Write a play, Browning," said the actor one day, after dining with the poet, "and keep me from going to America." The result was "Strafford," the first of three dramas that were successfully acted. The others were "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" and "Colombe's Birthday." All are interesting; but Browning was too metaphysical for a very successful playwright.

In an essay on Shelley, Browning divided poets into two classes — the objective and the subjective. The objective poets are chiefly concerned with the forms and colors of nature or the acts and outward experiences of men. Description is their prevailing mode. Or to use Browning's words, the objective poet is "one whose en-

deavor has been to reproduce things external (whether the phenomena of the scenic universe or the manifested action of human heart and brain), with an immediate reference in every case to the common eye and apprehension of his fellow-men, assumed capable of receiving and profiting by this reproduction." On the other hand, the subjective poet is chiefly concerned with the life of the soul. He struggles for the attainment of new and higher truth. To him spiritual realities seem of highest worth. Or to quote Browning's own explanation, the subjective poet has to do "not with the combinations of humanity in action, but with the primal elements of humanity; and he digs where he stands, preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of the absolute mind, according to the intimations of which he desires to perceive and speak." He is himself a preëminently subjective poet, who takes as his stage —

> "The soul itself,
> Its shifting fancies and celestial lights,
> With all its grand orchestral silences
> To keep the pauses of its rhythmic sounds."

In 1838 Browning visited the principal cities of Italy, a country which he was afterward to make his home for many years. On the voyage thither he wrote his most stirring lyric, "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix." The poem has no historical foundation. "I wrote it," the poet says, "under the bulwark of a vessel, off the African coast, after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse York, then in my stable at home."

In 1840 appeared "Sordello," a poem of six thousand lines, on which the poet had been working for several years. It illustrates his fondness for mediæval themes; and though he made elaborate researches to furnish him a background, the principal interest of the poem is in the development of soul life. It presents Browning's peculiarities — his psychological analysis, his rapid movement of thought, and his sudden transitions — in their most exaggerated form. It is obscure to an unusual degree and never can be popular beyond a very narrow circle. It has been variously judged by distinguished critics. Stedman pronounces it "a fault throughout . . . an unattractive prodigy," while Gosse professes to be able to "find a thousand reasons why 'Sordello' ought to be one of the most readable of books." The great majority of readers will agree with Stedman, and regret that the author's attempt to rewrite it in a more intelligible manner was a failure.

With "Sordello" the poet completed the first stage of his development. Up to this time his work had been a reflection of his own experience. In some measure "Paracelsus" and "Sordello" stood for Browning. But with the "Bells and Pomegranates" series, which appeared between 1841 and 1846, he entered into a broader sympathy with human life. He outgrew the trammels of self. "Bells and Pomegranates," a title signifying an alternation of poetry with thought, contains some of his choicest productions. The first of the series is the beautiful drama of "Pippa Passes," which consists of four scenes, with prologue, interludes, and epilogue. Its heroine is "a little black-eyed, pretty, singing Felippa, gay silk-winding girl,"

whose artless singing on a holiday marks a turning-point in the troubled lives of those whom she fondly imagines to be "Asolo's four happiest ones."

There is no other poem in all Browning's works that better illustrates his dramatic monologue than "My Last Duchess." For this reason, as well as for its artistic excellence, it deserves special attention. The speaker is a nobleman of aristocratic pride and high culture, but at the same time of a cold and selfish nature. He was a connoisseur in art. He had married a young and beautiful lady, whose love and cheerfulness filled the palace with sunshine: —

> "She had
> A heart — how shall I say? — too easily made glad,
> Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
> She looked on, and her looks went everywhere."

The proud and unfeeling duke looked on this sweet light-heartedness as unbecoming her station; and, accordingly, he commanded her to assume an artificial and haughty dignity. The result was, that joy, and hope, and love, were crushed out of her life, and she died of a broken heart: —

> "Oh, sir, she smiled, no doubt,
> Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
> Much the same smile? This grew; I gave command;
> Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
> As if alive."

The duke has entered into negotiations for the daughter of a count and has received the latter's agent to settle the details of dowry. While showing him through the palace,

the duke stops before the picture of his last wife, and here the poem begins: —

> "That's my last duchess painted on the wall,
> Looking as if she were alive."

The poem is a tragedy in sixty lines; but in place of external actions, we have a revelation of character and states of the soul.

Some of Browning's fundamental ideas are found in "Bells and Pomegranates." He looked upon human life as a struggle, in which the soul is to climb upwards, through successive attainments, toward divine perfection. In his drama "Luria," he says: —

> "How inexhaustibly the spirit grows!
> One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach
> With her whole energies and die content, —
> So like a wall at the world's edge it stood,
> With nought beyond to live for, — is that reached? —
> Already are new undreamed energies
> Outgrowing under, and extending farther
> To a new object; there's another world!"

This same idea of individual progress is presented more fully in a work of later date, "A Death in the Desert": —

> "I say that man was made to grow, not stop;
> That help, he needed once, and needs no more,
> Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn:
> For he hath new needs, and new helps to these.
> This imports solely, man should mount on each
> New height in view; the help whereby he mounts,
> The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,
> Since all things suffer change save God the Truth."

Among the other pieces of the "Bells and Pomegranates" series which deserve mention, are "The Pied Piper

of Hamlin," written to amuse the little son of the actor Macready, and "Saul," which ranks high among Browning's poems.

In 1846 Browning married Miss Elizabeth Barrett, to whom he had been drawn by her poetic gifts. She was an invalid and his senior by six years. Owing to anticipated opposition on both sides, the marriage was secret; and shortly after the ceremony the happy couple started to Italy, where, with short intervals, they lived till the death of Mrs. Browning in 1861. There was deep intellectual and spiritual sympathy between them; and with self-sacrifice on his part, and resignation on hers, the union, in spite of her continued invalid condition, was one of rare beauty and happiness.

The first three years of Browning's married life did not stimulate his literary activity. His mind seems to have found satisfaction in the society of his wife and in the natural and artistic beauties of Italy. It was not till 1850 that his next work appeared, "Christmas Eve and Easter Day." It is noteworthy for its direct discussion of Christianity. The poet believed that nature bears testimony, not only to the power, but also to the love of God. In "Christmas Eve" he says: —

> "In youth I looked to these very skies,
> And probing their immensities,
> I found God there, his visible power;
> Yet felt in my heart, amid all its sense
> Of the power, an equal evidence
> That his love, there too, was the nobler dower.
> For the loving worm within his clod
> Were diviner than a loveless god
> Amid his worlds, I will dare to say."

In 1855 appeared "Men and Women" in two volumes, a work that, upon the whole, represents the highest achievement of Browning's genius. "Evelyn Hope," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "By the Fireside," "Strange Medical Experiences of Karshish," "The Last Ride Together," "Bishop Blougram's Apology," "Andrea del Sarto," "Old Pictures in Florence," "In a Balcony," "Cleon," and others are notable poems. In their variety and depth they reveal the many-sidedness of the poet's gifts. In several of these poems we have Browning's views of art. He does not believe in the heresy of "art for art's sake." He recognizes the all-pervasive presence of Deity in nature; and it is the office of art to lead us toward the fulness of divine truth and beauty. The artist should have clearer vision than other men, and reveal to us the beauty that would otherwise pass unnoticed. Mere skill in craftsmanship is not enough to constitute a great artist; he must also have the uplifting power of a lofty purpose: —

> "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
> Or what's heaven for?"

These are the truths impressively presented in "Andrea del Sarto," the faultless painter. He was a master of technique, but was lacking in loftiness of aim. He recognized in Angelo and Rafael "a truer light of God"; and addressing his unsympathetic and worldly-minded wife, he says sadly and half reproachfully: —

> "Had the mouth there urged
> 'God and the glory! never care for gain.
> The present by the future, what is that?
> Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
> Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!'
> I might have done it for you."

Browning's views of love were far removed from all carnal taint or weak sentimentalism. With him love is a deep, strong passion, which, whether its object is attained or not, still brings its reward in its uplifting effect upon the soul. Thus, the discarded lover in "The Last Ride" is still able to say: —

> "My whole heart rises up to bless
> Your name in pride and thankfulness."

This deep and divine passion, so Browning maintained, might sometimes set aside or even laugh at the conventionalities of society. This is the meaning of the short poem, "Respectability." But to say that he was "tolerant of what is called intrigue," as Stedman has done, is to misapprehend the poet's meaning. It is lust, and not love in Browning's deep sense, that lies at the basis of a common intrigue. "In a Balcony" presents love as the supreme blessing of life: —

> "There is no good of life but love — but love!
> What else looks good, is some shade flung from love;
> Love yields it, gives it worth."

In Italy Browning made his home in Florence, "the Queen of Italy," as Mrs. Browning called it; but he remained there only a few months of each year, usually spending a part of his summers and winters elsewhere. He had a high appreciation of his wife's poetic gifts, and to a friend he once said, "She has genius; I am only a painstaking fellow." When she died at Florence in 1861, his sorrow was inconsolable. "I want her, I want her," was the simple cry that continually welled up from his

desolate heart. Shortly after her death he went to London, which was to be henceforth his home. Not wishing to subject his son to the ordeal of an English public school, he undertook the labor of fitting him for the University.

In 1864 he published "Dramatis Personæ," which contains several poems of marked excellence. Among these are "Abt Vogler," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," and "A Death in the Desert." In the first we find an expression of the poet's belief that all the good we hope or dream in this life — the ideals we cherish — will hereafter be realized. "On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a perfect round:" —

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good, shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty nor good nor power,
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once; we shall hear it by and by."

"A Death in the Desert" is notable as the only poem in which Browning deals directly with historic Christianity. The poem seems to have been evoked by Renan's "Vie de Jésus," which appeared in 1863. The poet holds that Christianity ultimately depends, not on historic proofs or miracles, but on its self-evidencing power. It satisfies the heart and solves the mysteries of life; and in these facts we find the guarantee of its truth: —

"I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ
Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
All questions in the earth and out of it,
And has so far advanced thee to be wise.

Wouldst thou unprove this to re-prove the proved?
In life's mere minute, with power to use that proof,
Leave knowledge and revert to how it sprung?
Thou hast it; use it and forthwith, or die!"

The fame of Browning was now well established. A younger generation, untrammelled by conventional prejudices, found delight and profit in his works. In 1867 he was honored by Oxford with the degree of A.M., and a few months later he was made honorary fellow of Balliol College. In 1868 appeared "The Ring and the Book," a poem of twenty-one thousand lines. It has been pronounced "the most precious and profound spiritual treasure that England has produced since the days of Shakespeare." While it is not necessary to accept this enthusiastic estimate, it is unquestionably a great poem. Of its twelve long cantos, "Pompilia" and "the Pope" are the best; the former is a simple narrative of the tragedy, the latter a fine soliloquy.

The remaining works of Browning can be barely more than mentioned. Some of them are elaborate compositions, but neither in matter nor in form do they add anything to the poet's fame. After "The Ring and the Book" he entered upon his third period of development, which is characterized by reflective rather than imaginative elements. Almost every year saw a new work issue from the press; but while we must admire the poet's unabated intellectual power, we miss the creative imagination that gave vitality and beauty to his earlier productions.

Browning was passionately fond of the Greek language and literature, and in the period under consideration he made three transcripts from the Greek tragedians. These

were "Balaustion's Adventure," containing a version of the "Alcestis" of Euripides, "Aristophanes' Apology," containing the "Herakles" of Euripides, and "The Agamemnon" of Æschylus. They reach a high degree of excellence, and in the first two the dramas of Euripides receive an additional interest from their setting. It is remarkable that Browning, with his great fondness for Greek literature, refused to regard even its best writers as models of style.

In "Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau," a thin disguise for Napoleon III., we have a defence of the policy of expediency. This poem illustrates a peculiarity of Browning's method. In defending a principle or course of action which the poet at heart regards as false, the hero of the piece is made to present truths of the weightiest import. This is true in "Bishop Blougram's Apology," and especially in "Fifine at the Fair." In the latter poem, while defending inconstancy in love, the speaker deals with some of the deepest problems of philosophy and life. Take this passage, for example: —

> "I search but cannot see
> What purpose serves the soul that strives, or world it tries
> Conclusions with, unless the fruit of victories
> Stay, one and all, stored up and guaranteed its own
> Forever, by some mode whereby shall be made known
> The gain of every life. Death reads the title clear —
> What each soul for itself conquered from out things here."

The poem "La Saisiaz," which was inspired by the death of a friend, contains Browning's most elaborate discussion of immortality. While conscious of the weakness of the usual logical proofs, he accepts the fact, as did



PALAZZO REZZONICO, ROBERT BARRETT BROWNING'S HOME IN VENICE.

House in which Robert Browning died.

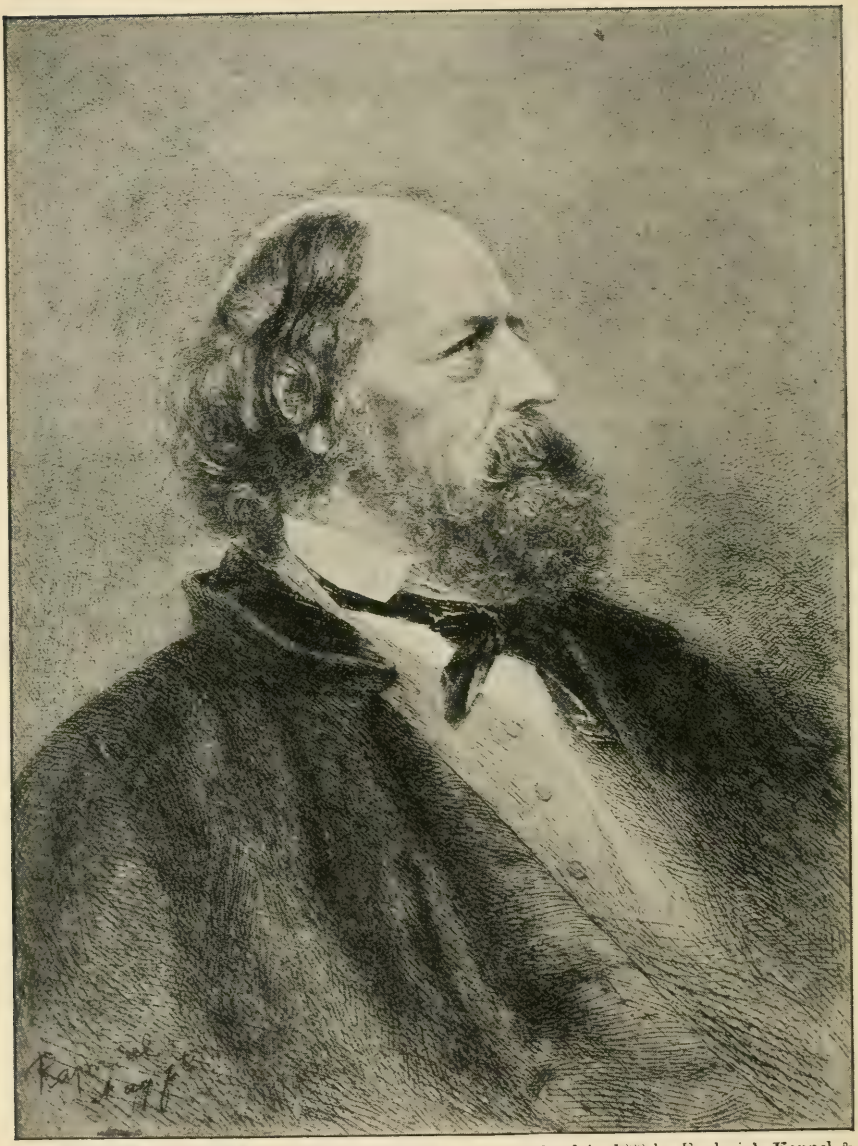
"Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it 'Italy.'
Such lovers old are I and she;
So it always was, so shall ever be."

Tennyson, on the evidence of the heart. "Ferishtah's Fancies" is another poem that contains interesting passages and valuable lessons. It embodies the mature wisdom of his later years.

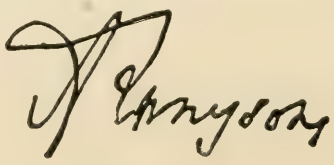
In its essential features the character of Browning might be inferred from the preceding survey of his life and writings. His poetry was the honest expression of his thought and feeling. In the unfriendly reception his works long met with, he showed the strength of conscious genius. With something of the sublime confidence of Wordsworth, he pitied the ignorance of his critics and counted on future recognition. As he grew older, he had a large circle of devoted friends; he was particularly drawn to noble women, who repaid him in admiration and affection. Though of a modest, retiring nature — so much so that he could never make a public speech — he was often a brilliant talker. He bestowed much labor on the revision of his poems. "People accuse me," he said, "of not taking pains! I take nothing but pains." In his later years he worked regularly, and counted that day as lost in which he had not written something. In his political and social views he was an avowed liberal and sympathized especially with the movement for the emancipation of women. His last years brought increasing physical infirmity, and he died at the home of his son in Venice, Dec. 12, 1889. A few days later, his body was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

Like Tennyson, Browning was a great teacher, a prophet for his people. He taught the reality of invisible things. The age needed his message. For many years there has been a strong drift in the direction of what is visible and

perishable. To many life has seemed a hard and hopeless struggle — a brief period of toil and suffering, which ends at last in darkness. In the midst of these wrong and depressing tendencies, Browning appeared with a voice of courage and hope. He preached God, and righteousness, and immortality, not in the language of cant, but with the freshness and vigor of one conscious of a divine mission.



At the age of 70. Etched from life by Paul Rajon. Copyrighted in 1888 by Frederick Keppel & Co., New York, London, and Paris.



ALFRED TENNYSON.

For the greater part of the Victorian period Alfred Tennyson stood at the head of English poetry. His extraordinary poetic genius was supported by broad scholarship. He absorbed the deepest and best thought of his age; and instead of mere passing fancies, his poetry embodies a depth of thought and feeling that gives it inexhaustible richness. Viewed from an artistic standpoint, his work is exquisite. He surpassed Pope in perfection of form; he equalled Wordsworth in natural expression; he excelled both Scott and Byron in romantic narrative; and he wrote the only great epic poem since the days of Milton.

Few poets have been more fortunate than Tennyson. His life was one of easy competence. In the retirement of a cultivated home, and in a narrow circle of congenial friends, he steadily pursued his vocation. Never did a poet consecrate himself more entirely to his art. He wrote no prose. He did not entangle himself in business, which has fettered many a brilliant genius. He encumbered himself with no public office, by which his poetic labors might have been broken. His career, like an English river, quietly flowed on among fertile hills and blooming meadows.

"From his boyhood," his son tells us, "he had felt the magic of Merlin — that spirit of poetry — which bade him know his power and follow throughout his work a pure and high ideal, with a simple and single devotedness and

a desire to ennoble the life of the world, and which helped him through doubts and difficulties to 'endure as seeing Him who is invisible.'" In "Merlin and the Gleam," the poet has given us his literary history.

The principal events in the life of Tennyson are the publication of his successive volumes. He was born at Somersby, in Lincolnshire, in 1809, the son of a clergyman, and the third of twelve children. It was a gifted family, which Leigh Hunt called "a nest of nightingales." After a careful training in the parsonage under his father, Alfred was sent, with two brothers, to Trinity College, Cambridge. His appearance was impressive, indicating at the same time strength and refinement. He was genial, joyous, and full of humor, though suffering at intervals from despondency. He was a diligent student, with a taste not only for the classics, but also for natural science. He took a lively interest in the political questions of the day, and, while opposed to radical or revolutionary measures, was an advocate of freedom. In "In Memoriam" there is a pleasing reminiscence of his college days, beginning: —

"I passed beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls;

"And heard once more in College fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder music, rolling, shake
The prophets blazoned on the panes."

The bent of his mind early showed itself; and in 1827, in connection with his brother Charles, he sent forth, as yet an undergraduate, a volume entitled "Poems, by Two

Brothers." As in the case of Byron, this first volume gave no token of genius. The poetry was correct but unreadably dull.

In 1829, in competition with Arthur Hallam, Tennyson won a medal for his prize poem on the subject of "Timbuctoo." This work contained some faint intimations of his latent powers. His literary career really opened in 1830 with a volume of "Poems, Chiefly Lyrical." With much that was faulty and immature — suppressed by the author in subsequent editions of his works — this volume announced the presence of a genuine poet. He did not, however, receive the recognition he deserved. Christopher North, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, mingled censure and praise — his censure being of the positive kind then in vogue. The poet resented the criticism; and in a volume published a little later, we find the following reply: —

"You did late review my lays,
Crusty Christopher;
You did mingle blame and praise,
Rusty Christopher;
When I learnt from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame,
Musty Christopher;
I could *not* forgive the praise,
Fusty Christopher."

Among the pleasing lyrics in this volume are "Lilian," "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," and especially "Mariana": —

"The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The clock slow ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made, did all confound

Her sense; but most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
Athwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then said she, 'I am very dreary,
He will not come,' she said;
She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,
O God, that I were dead!'"

In "The Poet" Tennyson lays down his conception of the poetic character. The poet is preëminently a seer, whose message of truth, flying over the earth, brings freedom and wisdom to men: —

"The poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

"He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul,
The marvel of the everlasting will
An open scroll."

At this period the poet's muse was very active. In 1832 appeared another volume, which exhibited more fully his poetic gifts and made a notable contribution to English verse. He easily took his place at the head of the younger race of singers. His lyrical power, his mastery of musical rhythm, his charm of felicitous expression, and his exquisite handling of form and color are everywhere apparent. His breadth of sympathy is shown by his successful treatment of ancient, mediæval, and modern themes. The "May Queen," with its tender pathos, at once touched the popular heart. In "Lady

Clara Vere de Vere" the nobility of character is presented in proud contrast with the nobility of birth: —

> "Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
> Tis only noble to be good.
> Kind hearts are more than coronets,
> And simple faith than Norman blood."

In "The Lotus Eaters," how exquisitely the sound is wedded to the sense: —

> "In the afternoon they came unto a land,
> In which it always seemèd afternoon.
> All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
> Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
> Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
> And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
> Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem."

This volume of 1832 introduces us to one of the fundamental elements of Tennyson's poetry. It is the blessedness of love in all its simple, everyday forms. He teaches us that the human heart was made for love; and whenever, for any reason, love is shut out of life, indescribable loneliness and sorrow are the inevitable result. This is the truth presented in "The Palace of Art," an allegory wrought out with exceeding care: —

> "And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
> Shut out from Love, and on her threshold lie
> Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
> Was common clay ta'en from the common earth,
> Moulded by God, and tempered with the tears
> Of angels to the perfect shape of man."

The uplifting and sanctifying power of Love is beautifully expressed in the "Idyls of the King": —

> "Indeed I know
> Of no more subtle master under heaven
> Than is the maiden passion for a maid,
> Not only to keep down the base in man,
> But teach high thought and amiable words,
> And courtliness and the desire of fame,
> And love of truth, and all that makes a man."

For the next ten years Tennyson published nothing except a few pieces in periodicals. Perhaps he had been discouraged by the want of appreciation on the part of professional critics. But he was by no means driven from his art: —

> "The light retreated,
> The landskip darkened,
> The melody deadened,
> The Master whispered
> 'Follow the Gleam.'"

This intervening period he devoted to diligent study, enlarging his intellectual range and perfecting himself in artistic expression. History, science, language, theology — all were assiduously pursued. He was a careful student of English poetry. He admired Wordsworth, whom he called "the dear old fellow." He had a strong appreciation of the elevation and power of Milton, and thought that "Lycidas" was "a test of any reader's poetic instinct." He believed that "Keats, with his high spiritual vision, would have been, if he had lived, the greatest of us all." Shakespeare's sonnets seemed to him scarcely inferior to his dramas. This long interim

was one of congenial labor and happiness, and the future seemed full of promise:—

> "Hope, a poising eagle, burnt
> Above the unrisen morrow."

From time to time he went to London, where he delighted in the "central war." He loved to walk in the busiest streets, to look at the city from the bridges of the Thames, and to stroll into the Abbey and St. Paul's. He belonged to the Sterling Club, and among the prominent literary men he met were Carlyle, Rogers, Thackeray, Dickens, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Campbell. As at college, he showed an eager interest in the scientific and economic questions of the day. His talk turned chiefly on politics, philosophy, and religion. His face was turned to the future, —

> "Yearning for the large excitement that the coming years would yield,
> Eager-hearted as a boy when first he leaves his father's field."

Carlyle gives the following etching of him at this period: "One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusky hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian-looking, clothes cynically loose, free and easy, smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous; I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe! we shall see what he will grow to."

Tennyson ripened into maturity, and in 1842 appeared

a new volume, in which are found many of his choicest pieces. He was no longer simply a master of delicate fancy and lyrical harmony; he had become also a thinker and teacher. Here appears his first work in connection with the legend of Arthur and the Round Table. Milton and Dryden had both thought of the Arthurian cycle as the subject of an epic poem. It was reserved for Tennyson to realize the idea; and so well has he done his work that we may congratulate ourselves that the older poets left the field unoccupied. Listen to the forceful beginning of the "Morte d'Arthur": —

> "So all day long the noise of battle rolled
> Among the mountains by the winter sea."

Where can we find a more graphic touch than the description of the flinging of Arthur's sword? —

> "*The great brand*
> *Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,*
> And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
> Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
> Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
> By night, with noises of the northern sea."

Here is a picture from "The Gardener's Daughter": —

> "For up the porch there grew an Eastern rose,
> That flowering high, the last night's gale had caught,
> And blown across the walk. One arm aloft —
> Gown'd in pure white that fitted to the shape —
> Holding the bush, to fix it back, she stood.
> A single stream of all her soft, brown hair
> Pour'd on one side: the shadow of the flowers
> Stole all the golden gloss, and, wavering

Lovingly lower, trembled on her waist —
Ah, happy shade — and still went wavering down,
But, ere it touched a foot that might have danced
The greensward into greener circles, dipt,
And mixed with shadows of the common ground!
But the full day dwelt on her brows, and sunn'd
Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe bloom,
And doubled his warmth against her lips,
And on the bounteous wave of such a breast
As never pencil drew. Half light, half shade,
She stood, a sight to make an old man young."

"Dora" has the charm of a Hebrew idyl — a poem that can hardly be read without tears. "Locksley Hall," a story of disappointed love, is known to all, and many of its lines have passed into daily use: —

"In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnish'd dove;
In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love.

* * * * * * * * *

"Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns."

"Godiva" is a story of heroic self-sacrifice, with many an exquisite passage. As the heroine returned to the palace, —

"All at once,
With twelve great shocks of sound, the shameless noon
Was clash'd and hammer'd from a hundred towers."

Almost every poem deserves particular mention. "Edward Gray" and "Lady Clare" are delightful ballads in the old style. "Ulysses" is a strong treatment of a classic theme. In "The Two Voices," "St. Simeon Stylites," and "The Vision of Sin" the poet enters the domain of

theology. The little song called "Farewell" gives expression to a feeling of sadness that has arisen in every sensitive bosom: —

"Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver;
No more by thee my steps shall be,
Forever and forever."

The burdening sense of loss on the death of a loved one never had stronger expression than in the little poem beginning, "Break, break, break": —

"And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But oh, for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still."

This volume placed Tennyson in the forefront of English poets. What is the secret of his charm? Apart from the exquisite finish of his poetry, in which, perhaps, he has never been excelled, his productions show the indefinable but manifest touch of genius. In thought, imagination, and expression he soars far beyond the reach of common singers. But more than that: his poetry is the honest utterance of a sincere and noble nature. There is nothing factitious; he gives faithful utterance to the truth and beauty he discovers in nature and human life. Unlike the productions of Browning, Tennyson's poetry is characterized by a chaste simplicity and clearness. In place of dealing with the violent and tragic passions of life, he confines himself within the boundaries of ordinary experience — to the great primal affections and interests — which he invests with the beauty or pathos of a highly gifted nature. It is

these facts that have given him so strong a hold upon the popular heart.

In 1847 appeared "The Princess." The author called it "A Medley"; and such it is, composed of mediæval and modern elements. Half jest, and half earnest, it yet reaches a serious solution of the vexed problem of woman's education: —

> "For woman is not undeveloped man,
> But diverse; could we make her as the man,
> Sweet love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
> Not like to like, but like in difference.
> Yet in the long years must they liker grow;
> The man be more of woman, she of man;
> He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
> Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
> She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
> Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
> Till at the last she set herself to man,
> Like perfect music unto noble words."

The romantic story is delightfully told; and the songs interspersed among the several parts are, perhaps, the finest in our language. Where can we match the "Bugle Song"?—

> "The splendor falls on castle walls
> And snowy summits old in story:
> The long light shakes across the lakes,
> And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
> Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
> Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying."

The sympathies of Tennyson were largely conservative, especially as he grew older. The lawlessness of Shelley and Byron was intolerable to him. He indeed recog-

nized the existing evils of society, but he looked for a remedy, not through any radical break with the established order of society, but in its gradual development into better things. Except the question of woman's place in the social order, he does not deal fully and progressively with any of the problems connected with the democratic movement of the age. He had no sympathy with the French Revolution, and Paris seemed to him —

"The red fool-fury of the Seine."

He had no confidence in democracy in its present state of ignorance. "I do not the least mind," he said, "if England, when the people are less ignorant and more experienced in self-government, eventually *becomes a democracy*. But violent, selfish, unreasoning democracy would bring expensive bureaucracy and the iron rule of a Cromwell."

In 1850 appeared "In Memoriam," the best elegiac poem ever written, and one that will perhaps never have a rival. It is written in memory of Arthur Hallam, a bosom friend of Tennyson's and a young man of rich gifts of mind and heart. A bright career seemed open to him; but while travelling in Germany for his health, he suddenly died at Vienna, in 1833. The poet's heart was wrung with grief; and under the weight of bereavement, he set himself resolutely to a consideration of the great mysteries of life, death, God, providence, eternal life. He does not deal with these subjects like a theologian or philosopher; but rising above the plane of the understanding, he finds his answers in the cravings of the heart and the intuitions of the spirit.

No other poem is so filled with the thought and feeling peculiar to our age. It rejects the seductive materialism of recent scientific thought; it is larger and less dogmatic than our creeds. With reverent heart the poet finds comfort at last in the "strong Son of God":—

"Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

"We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see;
And yet we trust it comes from thee,
A beam in darkness: let it grow."

Tennyson's love of nature, which was scarcely inferior to that of Wordsworth, was associated with the pervading presence of God. "Everywhere throughout the universe," to quote from his son's "Memoir," "he saw the glory and greatness of God, and the science of nature was particularly dear to him. Every new fact which came within his range was carefully weighed. As he exulted in the wilder aspects of nature and revelled in the thunderstorm, so he felt a joy in her orderliness; he felt a rest in her stead-

fastness, patient progress, and hopefulness." The human soul, which mysteriously comes from the universal being of God — draws "from out the boundless deep" — returns to Him in death, and thus becomes more intimately a part of nature. In this belief Tennyson sings of his departed friend in words of deep mystic beauty: —

"Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

"What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

"My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mixed with God and nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

"Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die."

The year "In Memoriam" appeared, Tennyson was married to Miss Emily Sellwood, to whom he had long been attached. He found in her a worthy helpmate, upon whose judgment he came to rely more and more. He was proud of her intellect and freely discussed with her his various literary projects. Through her gentle forethought and care, he was shielded from interruption and the burden of correspondence; and in seasons of depres-



TENNYSON'S WALK — FARRINGFORD.

"Land that he loved, that loved him! nevermore
Meadow of thine, smooth lawn, or wild seashore
Or woodlands, old, like Druid couches spread,
The master's feet shall tread." — WM. WATSON.

sion and sorrow, he was sustained and comforted by her cheerful courage and tender sympathy. Their union suggests his "perfect music set to noble words."

This same happy year of 1850, Tennyson succeeded Wordsworth as poet laureate. After his marriage he lived first at Twickenham, which he has made "doubly classic." The latter part of his life he lived at Farringford, Isle of Wight, and at his summer residence Aldworth in Surrey. He gathered about him a select circle of friends, who esteemed him as a man as highly as they admired him as a poet. He was fond of reading his poetry to appreciative hearers. In the prelude to the "Morte d'Arthur," he has described his manner: —

> "The poet little urged,
> But with some prelude of disparagement,
> Read, mouthing out his hollow *oe*'s and *ae*'s,
> Deep-chested music."

In 1855 appeared "Maud, and Other Poems." The principal poem in this volume has much divided critical opinion, but it is safe to say that it falls below his usual high achievement. The meaning of the poem, as explained by the poet himself, is the reclaiming power of love: "It is the story of a man who has a morbid nature, with a touch of inherited insanity, and very selfish. The poem is to show what love does for him. The war is only an episode. You must remember that it is not I myself speaking. It is this man with the strain of madness in his blood, and the memory of a great trouble and wrong that has put him out with the world."[1]

[1] *Century Magazine*, February, 1893.

"The Brook" is a charming idyl, containing a delicious, rippling inter-lyric: —

> "I come from haunts of coot and hern,
> I make a sudden sally,
> And sparkle out among the fern,
> To bicker down a valley."

Whatever doubts touching the poet's genius may have been started by "Maud," they were forever cleared away in 1859 by the appearance of the "Idyls of the King." These poems were received with enthusiasm. Consisting at first of only four — Enid, Vivien, Elaine, and Guinevere — the poet afterward wrought in the same field, until his ten idyls constitute a great epic poem. "Nave and transept, aisle after aisle," to use the language of Stedman, "the Gothic minster has extended, until, with the addition of a cloister here and a chapel yonder, the structure stands complete." These "Idyls" belong to the mountain summits of song. Brave knights, lovely women, mediæval splendor, undying devotion, and heart-breaking tragedies are all portrayed with the richest poetic art and feeling. Unlike the "Iliad" or "Paradise Lost," which appeal to us largely through their grandeur, the "Idyls of the King" possess a deep human interest. They arouse our sympathies. We weep for Elaine "the lily maid of Astolat," the victim of a hopeless love for Lancelot. How worthy of his praise!

> "Fair she was, my King,
> Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
> To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
> To doubt her pureness were to want a heart —
> Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
> Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

The agonies of Arthur and Guinevere at Almesbury go to the heart: —

"Lo! I forgive thee, as Eternal God
Forgives; do thou for thine own soul the rest.
But how to take last leave of all I loved?
O golden hair, with which I used to play,
Not knowing! O imperial-moulded form,
And beauty such as never woman wore,
Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee.
I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
But Lancelot's: they never were the King's.
* * * * * *
My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
So far, that my doom is, I love thee still.
Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
Hereafter in that world where all are pure,
We two may meet before high God, and thou
Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,
Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
I charge thee, my last hope."

How beautiful the words of Arthur, as he seeks in his last moments to comfort the lonely and grief-stricken Sir Bedivere: —

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May he within himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. . . .
I am going a long way
With these thou seest — if indeed I go
(For all my mind is clouded with a doubt) —
To the island valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea."

In 1864 appeared "Enoch Arden," a work of great beauty. It depicts with deep pathos the heroism to be found in humble life. Beauty, pathos, heroism — these are qualities that give it high rank, and have made it perhaps the most popular of all Tennyson's writings. Human nature is portrayed at its best; and like all our author's poetry, "Enoch Arden" unconsciously begets faith in man and makes us hopeful of the future of our race.

Of Tennyson's other works we cannot speak. It is enough to say that they add nothing to his fame.

The quiet beauty of his death formed a fitting close to his long and uneventful career. On the evening of the 6th of October, 1892, the soul of the great poet passed away. The prayer he had breathed two years before in the little poem, "Crossing the Bar," was answered: —

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

"But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

"Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark.

"For tho' from out our bourn of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

He was entombed by the side of Chaucer in Westminster Abbey, while two continents lamented his death.

Whatever changes of taste or fashion may hereafter come in poetry, surely we are justified in believing that Tennyson will continue to hold a high rank. His work is too true in thought, feeling, and execution to pass away. It will abide as a perpetual source of pleasure and strength. While tenderly sensitive to beauty, he possessed profound ethical feeling and spiritual insight. Keenly sympathetic with the restless search after truth characteristic of our time, he avoided its vagaries and dangers, and continued a trustworthy teacher, inspiring confidence in man, hope in the future, and faith in God. In the words of Longfellow's beautiful sonnet: —

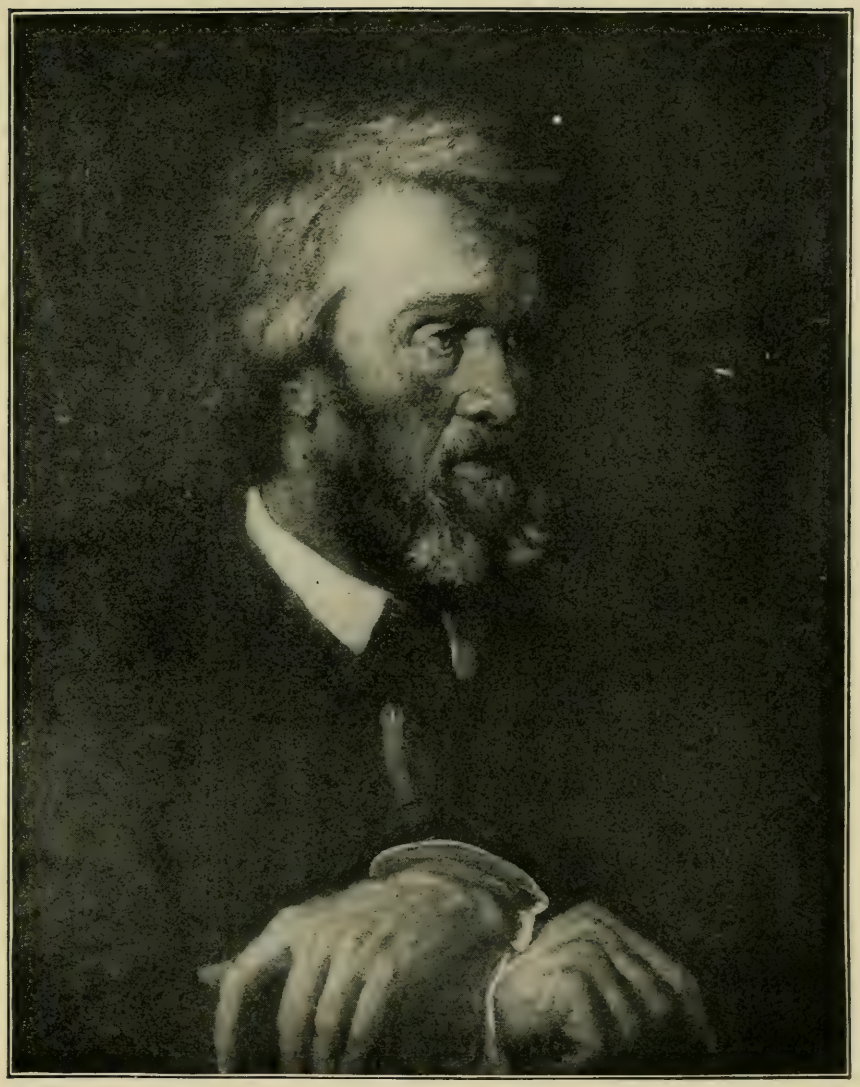
"Not of the howling dervishes of song,
Who craze the brain with their delirious dance,
Art thou, O sweet historian of the heart!
Therefore to thee the laurel leaves belong,
To thee our love and our allegiance,
For thy allegiance to the poet's art."

THOMAS CARLYLE.

THERE are three Scotchmen who have reflected great glory on their native land by brilliant literary achievement. Utterly unlike in temperament and character, they have each stood at the head of an important department of literature. No one will question the position of Burns as chief of popular lyrists. Scott is supreme in historical romance. And Carlyle? He is the thinker, moralist, preacher, who forced an unwilling generation to hear and heed his trumpet-toned message.

As in the case of many other great writers, Carlyle's outward life presents nothing remarkable. His biography is chiefly subjective. He was not high-born; he filled no prominent civic position; he was not an active leader in any of the great movements of his day. He was, rather, a voice in the wilderness. His life stands in striking contrast with that of Macaulay. While Macaulay was a man of affairs, and attained distinction as an orator, legislator, and cabinet minister, Carlyle was a recluse student, and rose to prominence by his power as a man of letters. Our study is to be, not so much a record of outward facts, as the development of a strong personality.

Carlyle had strong faith in the principle of heredity. In his famous Edinburgh address, he says: "There is a great deal more in genealogy than is generally believed at present. I never heard tell of any clever man that came of entirely stupid people." In his own biographi-



Photograph after the painting by G. F. Watts.

Thomas Carlyle

cal writings he gives prominence to ancestry; and in his "Reminiscences," he pays an affectionate tribute to his parents, from whom, as he points out, he inherited his leading physical and mental characteristics. Along with extraordinary mental vigor, his father, who was a mason, spoke in a style bold, glowing, and picturesque. His mother possessed the sturdy sense and forceful uprightness that made her a worthy companion of her husband. They lived in humble circumstances at Ecclefechan, Scotland, where their gifted son was born Dec. 4, 1795.

In "Sartor Resartus" we have an interesting autobiographical account of his school days. At the age of ten he was sent to school at Annan, where his sensitive nature exposed him to petty persecutions from his playmates. He was nicknamed "Tom the Tearful." Yet he did not always meekly submit to his tormentors. "At rare intervals did the young soul burst forth into fire-eyed rage, and, with a stormfulness under which the boldest quailed, assert that he too had rights of man, or at least of manikin."

In after years the training he received at Annan appeared to him exceedingly mechanical. Though he made good attainments in Latin, French, and especially mathematics, he characterized his teachers as "hide-bound pedants" and "mechanical gerund-grinders." In "Sartor" the school itself bears the suggestive German name of "Hinterschlag Gymnasium." "The Hinterschlag professors," he says, "knew syntax enough; and of the human soul thus much: that it had a faculty called memory, and could be acted on through the muscular integument by appliance of birch rods."

It was the wish of his father that he should study for the ministry; and, accordingly, in 1809, he was sent to the University of Edinburgh. He made the journey of nearly a hundred miles on foot. Not many details of his university career have been preserved. He studied diligently, lived in comparative seclusion, and devoted a considerable part of his time to miscellaneous reading. From the chaos of the library he fished up "more books perhaps than had been known to the keepers thereof. The foundation of a literary life was hereby laid." Like Bacon, Milton, and a few other illustrious English authors, he found fault with the subjects of study and methods of instruction. In the autobiographical part of "Sartor," he says, with humorous exaggeration: "It is my painful duty to say that, out of England and Spain, ours was the worst of all hitherto discovered universities." He completed his studies in 1814; and while none of his professors seem to have discovered his ability, his intimate associates, with greater discernment, foretold his future eminence.

After leaving the university, Carlyle taught for two years at Annan, and afterward, for the same length of time, at Kirkcaldy. He was faithful in his pedagogical labors; but because he preferred his books to the visitation of his patrons, he acquired a reputation for unsociability. But pedagogy was not his vocation. His native dislike to teaching soon grew into a settled abhorrence. "At the end," to use his own words, "my solitary, desperate conclusion was fixed: that I, for my own part, would prefer to perish in the ditch, if necessary, rather than continue living by such a trade, and peremptorily

gave it up accordingly." At Kirkcaldy he had his first romance, which appears in idealized form in "Sartor."

Carlyle had not yet found his work. His inability to subscribe the creeds of the church led him to give up the ministry. In 1818 he went to Edinburgh, where he taught a few private pupils and, at the same time, studied law. Dyspepsia, which remained a plague throughout life, began to torment him, and to tinge his thought with gloom. He fell into a state of doubt and unbelief, which in "Sartor" he describes as "The Everlasting No." "We see him quite shut out from hope; looking, not into the golden orient, but vaguely, all around, into a dim, copper firmament, pregnant with earthquake and tornado." In his gloom and discouragement, he thought for a time, as did Burns, Coleridge, and Southey, of emigrating to America.

From this state of doubt and unbelief, which he calls his temptation in the wilderness, he finally passed into a permanent condition of faith. "This is *The Everlasting Yea*, wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him." This experience, which was a kind of regeneration, was the great turning-point in Carlyle's life. It made him henceforth a positive force for truth and righteousness. Nature seemed to him as the vesture of God; life was filled with significance; duty became sacred; and an infinite love and pity took possession of his heart. He now had his divine commission as teacher; and with the courage and fidelity of a Hebrew prophet, he delivered his message.

He gave up the study of law; and after a series of tentative efforts, not unattended with discouragements,

he finally embarked upon the literary career, for which nature evidently intended him. His first work was the contribution of sixteen articles, mostly biographical, to the "Edinburgh Encyclopædia." He translated Legendre's "Geometry" from the French — a task in which his superior mathematical gifts stood him in great stead. But far more important was his work in German, the influence of which on his style, his thought, and the intellectual life of England can hardly be overestimated. He made himself the best German scholar in the British Isles and did more than any other writer to acquaint the English people with the treasures of German literature. He made translations from Fouqué, Tieck, Hoffman, Richter, Schiller, and, above all, Goethe. His "Life of Schiller" appeared in 1823 and Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister" in 1824. During these years he was tutor to Charles Buller (afterward a distinguished member of Parliament) at a salary of two hundred pounds.

While sarcastic and ungenerous to most of his great contemporaries, Carlyle recognized in Goethe his one great master. He spoke of Lamb as an "emblem of imbecility." To him "poor Shelley always was a kind of ghastly object, colorless, pallid, without health, or warmth, or vigor." Macaulay was "a sophistical, rhetorical, ambitious young man of talent." He described Coleridge, to whom he devoted a famous chapter in the "Life of Sterling," as "a puffy, anxious, obstructed-looking, fattish old man," who hobbled about and talked "with a kind of solemn emphasis on matters which were of no interest." But Goethe, whom he always speaks of with reverence, seemed to him the most notable literary man that had

appeared in a hundred years. In "Sartor" he inquires: "Knowest thou no prophet, even in the vesture, environment, and dialect of this age? None to whom the godlike had revealed itself, through all meanest and highest forms of the common; and by him been again prophetically revealed; in whose inspired melody, even in these rag-gathering and rag-burning days, man's life again begins, were it but far off, to be divine? Knowest thou none such? I know him, and name him — Goethe."

In 1826, after a courtship which lasted through several years and which was not free from storms, Carlyle married Jane Baillie Welsh, a woman who, above him in birth, was scarcely his inferior in intellect. Though there was genuine affection on both sides, the union was not ideally happy. With all her charming graces "Jeannie" had a sharp tongue; and in sarcasm she was a match for her gifted husband. Occasion was not lacking. With an intense devotion to his work, Carlyle sacrificed his friends as completely as himself. The honeymoon was scarcely over till he buried himself in his studies; and throughout the forty years of his married life he in a large measure sacrificed domestic comfort and companionship to his literary pursuits and ambitions. Patience was not one of "Jeannie's" virtues, and it is significant that she wrote to a young friend, "My dear, whatever you do, never marry a man of genius." But in spite of all discord and complaints, she exhibited a beautiful devotion; and when she died in 1866, she was not undeserving of the noble tribute her grief-stricken husband paid her: "My noble one! I say deliberately her part in the stern battle, and except myself none knows how stern, was brighter and braver

than my own. Thanks, darling, for your shining words and acts, which were continual in my eyes, and in no other mortal's. Worthless I was of your divinity, wrapt in your perpetual love of me and pride in me, in defiance of all men and things. Oh, was it not beautiful!"

After his marriage Carlyle took up his residence for a time in Edinburgh, where he enjoyed the friendship of Sir William Hamilton, Sir David Brewster, De Quincey, whose unfavorable review of "Wilhelm Meister" had been forgiven, and, above all, of Jeffrey, who took a deep interest in the struggling author. Jeffrey opened to him the *Edinburgh Review*, in which appeared in 1827 "Richter" and "The State of German Literature." These were the first of a splendid series of historical and critical reviews, which came out in the leading periodicals of the day, and which made him, with the possible exception of Macaulay, the foremost essayist of the century. He toiled tremendously at the tasks he undertook; and his essays are characterized by exhaustive research, deep philosophical insight, rare independence of judgment, and a passionate energy of expression. Among the essays especially noteworthy, if a distinction may be made where all attain a high degree of excellence, are "Goethe," "Burns," "Voltaire," "Signs of the Times," "Novalis," "Characteristics," "Boswell's Life of Johnson," and "Sir Walter Scott."

In 1828 Carlyle moved to Craigenputtoch, — the Hill of the Hawks, — where the next six years of his life were spent in great seclusion. Craigenputtoch was a remote farm in Dumfriesshire, of which the best that can be said is, that it was not "the dreariest spot in the British domin-

ions." It was here that in 1831 he wrote "Sartor Resartus" — The Tailor Patched. It is the first book in which his strong personality found complete expression. Under the character of Teufelsdroeckh, he pours forth, sometimes in the highest form of prose-poetry, his deepest thoughts on individual and social life. While it might be styled a treatise on things in general, its one great purpose is to teach the important lesson of discriminating between appearances and realities. It is echoed in Tennyson and Emerson. Though Carlyle afterward modified some of his views, "Sartor" contains substantially the great prophetic message he had for the world.

As his wife finished reading the last pages, she said, "It is a work of genius, dear." Her judgment, which rarely erred in literary matters, has been abundantly sustained. Carlyle had done his best and naturally regarded the result with favor. But the London publishers were slow to discover its merits. Its daring originality shocked the conventional taste of the time, and, to the great chagrin of the author, he could not get it published for two years. When at length it appeared serially in *Fraser's Magazine*, it was almost universally decried for what was called its obscure and barbarous style. There were only two people, Carlyle said, who found in it anything worth reading, — Emerson and an Irish priest. But he lived to see a change — one of the most remarkable in the annals of English literature. Before his death "Sartor Resartus" had become one of the most popular and most influential books of the century. It is noteworthy that its excellence was first recognized in America.

Much has been said about Carlyle's style, which first

appears in its fully developed form in "Sartor." Sterling, in an interesting letter quoted by Carlyle himself, points out its leading peculiarities, — its barbarous words, its abuse of compounds, its license of invention, and its German constructions. Certainly it is different from that of any other English writer, and has justly called for the designation "Carlylese." But whatever may be its peculiarities, there can be no doubt that it was his natural method of utterance and that it was an instrument of tremendous power. It originated, as Froude tells us, "in the old farmhouse at Annandale. The humor of it came from his mother. The form was his father's common mode of speech, and had been adopted by himself for its brevity and emphasis." Its rugged form — its "nodulosities and angularities" — was exactly suited to his rugged character. Its words sometimes fairly shriek from the pages. It is exceedingly concrete (Carlyle hated abstractions), and abounds in remote allusions, from which arises its principal obscurity. We may apply to him his description of the style of Teufelsdroeckh — a passage that will serve at the same time as an illustration: "Occasionally we find consummate vigor, a true inspiration; his burning thoughts step forth in fit burning words, like so many full-formed Minervas, issuing amid flame and splendor from Jove's head; a rich idiomatic diction, picturesque allusions, fiery poetic emphasis, or quaint tricksy turns; all the graces and terrors of a wild imagination, wedded to the clearest intellect, alternate in beautiful vicissitude. Were it not that sheer sleeping and soporific passages, circumlocutions, repetitions, touches even of pure doting jargon, so often intervene! On the whole, Professor Teufelsdroeckh is not

a cultivated writer. Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine-tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed up by props of parentheses and dashes, and ever with this or the other tagrag hanging from them; a few even sprawl out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered."

In 1834 Carlyle left the dreary farm of Craigenputtoch to live in London. His limited means enforced the strictest economy; but his modest home became a centre for the gathering of the best literary talent of the metropolis. The first years of his London residence, from 1834 to 1837, he devoted to the "French Revolution," a subject that had long occupied his attention. It is less a history than prose epic. In place of conventional details, it abounds in graphic pictures, tragic incidents, and tumultuous feeling. It lacks only metrical form to take rank with the "Iliad." Carlyle was a preacher rather than artist. The "French Revolution" was written to impress upon his age, which he believed to be full of shams, hypocrisies, and injustice, his great fundamental principle that God governs this universe in justice, and that all wrong-doing will, sooner or later, be followed by retribution. The first volume, the manuscript of which had been accidentally destroyed while in the hands of John Stuart Mill, was rewritten with heroic spirit. "What they will do with this book," he said to his wife, "none knows, my lass; but they have not had for two hundred years any book that came more truly from a man's very heart, and so let them trample it under foot and hoof as they see best." "They will not trample that," she answered cheerily, and she was right. While its unsparing independence of spirit displeased various classes and parties, its unmistakable

freshness and power were immediately recognized. It placed Carlyle's reputation as a writer upon a solid foundation. Dickens carried it with him in his travels; Thackeray gave it an enthusiastic review; Southey read it no fewer than six times.

But the "French Revolution," while adding immensely to his fame, did not at once replenish his purse. Through the kindly solicitation of some friends, among whom was Harriet Martineau, he was induced to deliver a course of lectures. His reputation made it easy to secure a select and intelligent audience at a pound apiece. Without the graces of an accomplished orator, his wide range of knowledge and rare command of language made him a speaker of impressive power. His voice was harsh; his gestures were abrupt and angular; and, worst of all, he had the habit of distorting his features as if suffering great physical pain.

In all he delivered four courses of lectures, which brought him the comfortable sum of eight hundred pounds, and relieved his domestic needs. He delivered his last and best course in 1840 on "Heroes and Hero-Worship." These lectures were shortly afterward published in book form, and make one of his most interesting volumes. Its underlying principle is the belief that all human progress is due to the small number of supremely gifted men, whom God sends into the world at favored epochs.

His next notable work, "Past and Present," had a political aim. It was inspired by the disturbances of 1842 — a period of financial depression and social unrest. The odious Corn Laws had made bread dear; and while the noble and the wealthy were living in ease and extrava-

gance, thousands of workingmen, without employment, were on the point of starvation. The social condition of England in a measure exhibited the evils which had precipitated the French Revolution. Carlyle was filled with indignation and alarm. "We seem to me near the anarchies," he wrote to his wife. It was these circumstances that called forth the burning words of "Past and Present" — once more a mighty plea for truth, duty, justice. "Foolish men imagine," he exclaimed, "that because judgment for an evil thing is delayed, there is no justice but an accidental one, here below. Judgment for an evil thing is many times delayed some day or two, some century or two, but it is sure as life, it is sure as death! In the centre of the world-whirlwind, verily now as in the oldest days, dwells and speaks a God. The great soul of the world is *just*." It sold rapidly, and exerted no small influence, not only on the thought of the time, but also on subsequent legislation.

In 1845 appeared "Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," which had cost Carlyle five years of tedious and painful toil, and which is regarded by Froude as the most important contribution to English history made in this century. To Carlyle the great Protector was a hero, whose sincerity and truth deserved to be held up as an impressive lesson in an age when "conviction and veracity were giving place to hollow cant and formulism." It permanently rescued the name of Cromwell from the obloquy which political and ecclesiastical conservatism had heaped upon it. "With his own right hand, alone and by a single stroke," says Frederic Harrison, "he completely reversed the judgment of the English nation about their

greatest man. The whole weight of church, monarchy, aristocracy, fashion, literature, and wit had for two centuries combined to falsify history and distort the character of the noblest of English statesmen. And a simple man of letters, by one book, at once and forever reversed this sentence, silenced the allied forces of calumny and rancour, and placed Oliver for all future time as the greatest hero of the Protestant movement."

Many interesting details of Carlyle's life at this period — his friendships with the noble and the great, his journeys at home and abroad, the eloquent appeals of his political pamphlets — are necessarily passed over. He produced one more monumental work, "Frederick the Great." The most elaborate of all his works, it cost him thirteen years of almost incredible toil. During this period he withdrew almost entirely from society, and, on the best authority, "made entire devastation of any satisfactory semblance of home life or home happiness." The first two volumes appeared in 1858, the third in 1862, the fourth in 1864, and the last two in 1865. Of all his works this had the swiftest success, three editions being quickly exhausted. It was at once translated into German, and in Germany it met with the warmest appreciation. Henceforth there was no one to challenge Carlyle's right to a place among the greatest of English writers.

After a long struggle against poverty, indifference, neglect, depreciation, Carlyle finally achieved a permanent triumph. Even former opponents now recognized his worth. Scotland, which had long been indifferent or hostile to her gifted son, hastened to do him honor. In 1865 he was elected over Disraeli to succeed Gladstone as

rector of Edinburgh University, and the following year he delivered his Inaugural Address, which was enthusiastically received, not only by the students, but also by the people of Great Britain. As Tyndall telegraphed Mrs. Carlyle, who was specially solicitous about her husband's success, it was "a perfect triumph." But alas! the satisfaction of it all was to be of short duration. Three weeks later, while Carlyle was still in Scotland, he received a telegram announcing the sudden death of his wife. He never recovered from the blow.

The closing years of his life were like a clouded evening sky, which, with deepening gloom, shows now and then a momentary rift of sunshine. His bereavement, at one fell stroke, stripped him of his Titanic strength. He undertook no other great work. Though he had the sustaining affection of admiring friends and disciples, he came to feel more and more, as death took away one after another of those who had been dear to him, that he was a lonely wanderer in the world. His one "expensive luxury was charity"; for in spite of the sternness of his manner, and the harshness of some of his teaching, he had a kindly heart. The poor and helpless never appealed to him in vain. In the period of deep depression following the death of his wife, he wrote his "Reminiscences," a pathetic record of supreme affection and ineradicable remorse. What a depth of penitence is to be found in the following admonition, evidently based on the recognition of his own irremediable mistakes: "Cherish what is dearest while you have it near you, and wait not till it is far away. Blind and deaf that we are; oh, think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweep

down the paltry little dust clouds and dissonances of the moment, and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful, when it is too late!" Though his physical strength gradually faded away, his mind retained its native vigor to the last. He died Feb. 4, 1881; and, as he had desired, his body was laid to rest in the rural churchyard at Ecclefechan.

And now, what of the man and his message? That he had his weaknesses and limitations, has already been made apparent; but that he was a "blatant impostor" or a "shallow dogmatist," is what no unprejudiced mind will believe. The foundation of his character was a rugged honesty — an unselfish love of truth. Throughout his life, in spite of dyspeptic irritability and violence, he was a bold assailant of wrong and a fearless champion of truth and righteousness. With the courage of a Hebrew prophet, he resolutely put aside every selfish consideration in the faithful proclamation of his message. In all his writings he labored in the utmost sincerity.

Carlyle was a profoundly religious man. Though he could not accept any of the existing ecclesiastical creeds, he recognized the existence of a personal, omnipresent Deity, and reverenced his revelation in nature and history. His religion lay at the basis of his sincerity. He had no tolerance for materialism or scepticism. "No nation," he said in his Inaugural Address, "which did not contemplate this wonderful universe with an awe-stricken and reverential belief that there was a great unknown, omnipotent, and all-wise and all-just Being, superintending all men in it, and all interests in it — no nation ever came to very much, nor did any man either, who forgot that.



CARLYLE'S MONUMENT.

Cheyne Row.

"Dead, who had served his time,
Was one of the people's kings,
Had labour'd in lifting them out of the slime,
And showing them souls have wings."

— TENNYSON.

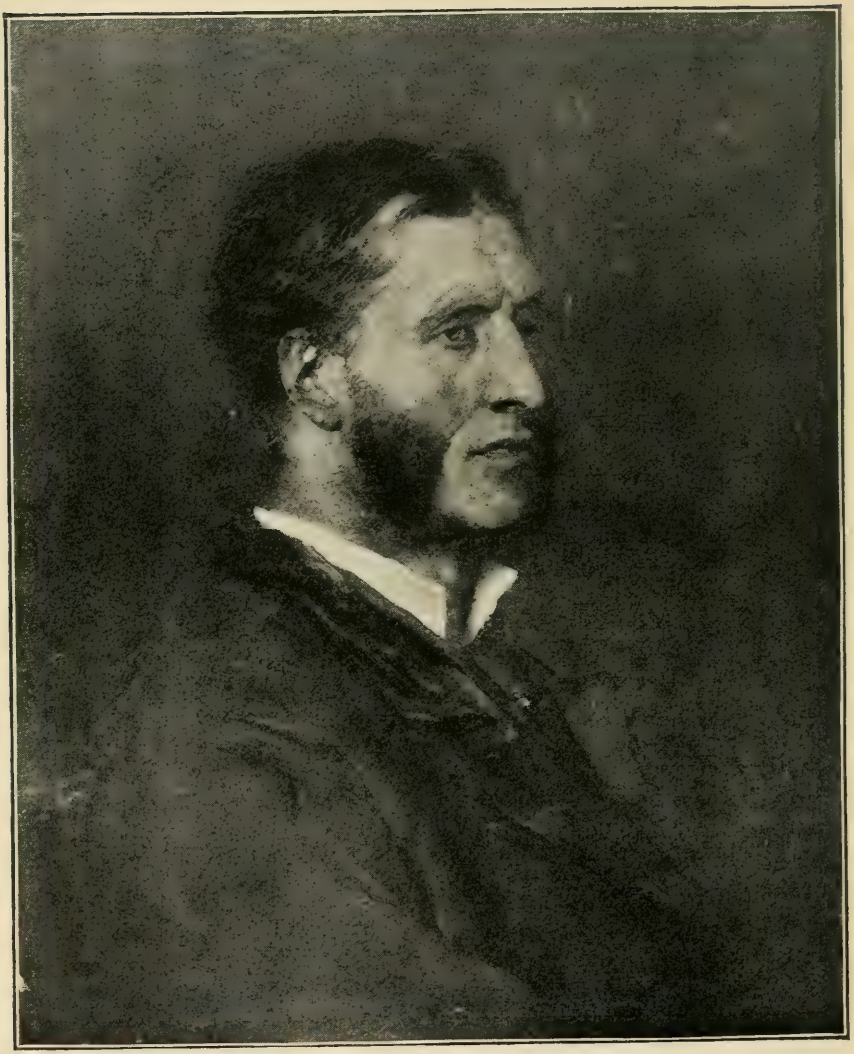
If a man did forget that, he forgot the most important part of his mission in this world." His experience led him to accept the truth of a special Providence; and of immortality he wrote, "The possibility, nay, in some way, the certainty of permanent existence daily grows plainer to me."

He held, more or less consistently, to a mystical or transcendental philosophy of nature. "All visible things," he says in "Sartor," "are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly taken, is not there at all; matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some idea, and *body* it forth." This is the key to much of his teaching. To him natural law was the immediate manifestation of the Divine will; and whoever, therefore, in any way contravenes natural law, thereby sets himself in opposition to God. He believed God to be just; and from this fact he deduced his famous maxim, which has sometimes been misunderstood, that "Might is right"; or, in other words, that power springs from righteousness. Wrong is essentially weak because God is against it. "Deep in the heart of the noble man," he says, "it lies forever legible, that as an invisible just God made him, so will and must God's justice and this only, were it never so invisible, ultimately prosper in all controversies and enterprises and battles whatsoever."

This mystical or transcendental way of looking at the world explains the peculiarity of his political views. He had a deep sense of the individual worth of man. He adopted the words of Chrysostom, "The true Shekinah is man." His fiercest polemics are against the oppressio of the laboring classes. But with all his sym-

pathy for the common people, he felt a deep distrust of their power to govern themselves. He loved, but he did not trust mankind. While intensely democratic in humanitarian sentiment, he was aggressively aristocratic in his governmental theories. He held that only the best and ablest men should rule — a class not likely to be chosen, as he thought, by popular vote. This aristocratic tendency, which is against the irresistible democratic movement of the time, has largely discredited his political teachings.

In its essential features, Carlyle's was a great life. No other writer left a deeper impress on the Victorian Age. In spite of weaknesses and errors, the weight of his life was on the side of righteousness. As he quaintly wrote in one of his letters, "I've had but one thing to say from beginnin' to end o' my books, and that was, that there's no other reliance for this world or any other but just the Truth, and that if men did not want to be damned to all eternity, they had best give up lyin' and all kinds o' falsehood; that the world was far gone already through lyin', and that there's no hope for it, save just so far as men find out and believe the Truth, and match their lives to it."



Hollyer, photograph after painting by G. F. Watts.

Matthew Arnold. -

1883.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

In deference to his express wish, Matthew Arnold has not been made the subject of a biography. The wish, no doubt, grew out of a delicate aversion to unnecessary publicity. There is nothing in the general tenor, or particular circumstances of his life, of which he might feel ashamed. All that we are able to learn of him is of good report; and whatever may be his fame as a poet and critic, he deserves still higher admiration for his genuine worth as a man.

The nearest approach to a biography is a collection of two volumes of his Letters. They were written principally to members of his own family, and were evidently never intended for publication. They are written with natural simplicity, and reveal to us a laborious, cultivated, kind-hearted man. It is not the "apostle of culture" that speaks in them, but the diligent school inspector, and the affectionate son, husband, father, and friend. We hear less about "sweetness and light" than about commonplace interests and duties. In the words of the editor of the Letters, who knew him well, "Nature had given him a sunny temper, quick sympathy, and inexhaustible fun. But something more than nature must have gone to make his constant unselfishness, his manly endurance of adverse fate, his buoyancy in breasting difficulties, his unremitting solicitude for the welfare and enjoyment of those who

stood nearest to his heart. Self-denial was the law of his life, yet the word never crossed his lips."

Matthew Arnold was born at Laleham, in the valley of the Thames, Dec. 24, 1822. He was the eldest son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the historian of Rome and the famous head-master of Rugby. "It is not necessary," said the great master once in administering discipline, "that this should be a school of three hundred, or one hundred, or fifty boys, but it *is* necessary that it should be a school of Christian gentlemen." Matthew Arnold revered the memory of his father, and in one of his letters pays him this tribute: "This is just what makes him great — that he was not only a good man, saving his own soul by righteousness, but that he carried so many others with him in his hand, and saved them, if they would let him, along with himself."

Arnold's mother, who lived to enjoy her son's rising fame, was a woman of marked excellence of mind and character. She kept in touch with the expanding knowledge of the century. When she died, in 1873, he wrote to a friend: "She had a clearness and fairness of mind, an interest in things, and a power of appreciating what might not be in her own line, which was very remarkable, and which remained with her to the very end of her life." A large part of his published correspondence consists of letters to his mother. Well might he say to her in one of them, "The more I see of the world, the more I feel thankful for the bringing up we had, so unworldly, so sound, so pure."

We have only meagre details of his childhood. In 1836 he entered Winchester College, where his cleverness as a



FOX HOW, AMBLESIDE. THE ARNOLD HOME.

Great men have been among us; hands that penned
And tongues that uttered wisdom — better none.

student secured him exemption from the humiliation and cruelties of fagging. A year later he entered Rugby, and in 1840 he won a school prize with his first published poem, "Alaric at Rome." The glimpses we get of his school life indicate that he was a student of unusual diligence and promise.

In 1841 he entered Balliol College, Oxford, where he distinguished himself by the extent and accuracy of his attainments. In 1842 he won a scholarship, and the year following he gained the Newdigate prize with his poem on "Cromwell." Though in later years he criticised Oxford, he always retained a tenderness for it, with all its faults loving it still. "Beautiful city!" he exclaims in the preface to his "Essays on Criticism," "so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene!

'There are our young barbarians all at play!'

"And yet, steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Ages, who will deny that Oxford, by her ineffable charm, keeps ever calling us nearer to the true goal of all of us, to the ideal, to perfection, — to beauty, in a word, which is only truth seen from another side? — nearer, perhaps, than all the science of Tübingen."

He graduated at Balliol College in 1844, and the following year became a fellow of Oriel. He taught Latin and Greek for a short time at Rugby and in 1847 became private secretary to Lord Lansdowne. His published letters begin the following year, and enable us, from that

time on, to follow pretty fully his movements and his thoughts. He took a lively interest in the social and political changes going on in Europe in 1848, and lamented the narrowness and insensibility of England in the presence of democratic ideas on the Continent.

For the first time we get a glimpse of his reading and favorite authors. He lived with the masters of thought. He cared but little for the literature of the day, which to him was "not bracing or edifying in the least." His estimate of contemporaries was generally under the mark. Among the authors he read at this period were Bacon, Pindar, Sophocles, Milton, Thomas à Kempis, and Ecclesiasticus. But the two writers who exercised a great and permanent influence upon him were Goethe and Wordsworth. In a letter written in 1848, he says: "I have been returning to Goethe's Life, and think higher of him than ever. His thorough sincerity — writing about nothing that he had not experienced — is in modern literature almost unrivalled. Wordsworth resembles him in this respect; but the difference between the range of their two experiences is immense, and not in the Englishman's favor." In a poem dating from this time, we find another reference to these same great authors: —

> "Too fast we live, too much are tried,
> Too harassed, to attain
> Wordsworth's sweet calm, or Goethe's wide
> And luminous view to gain."

In 1851 Arnold was appointed inspector of schools. It would be a mistake to think of him solely as a literary man. For thirty-five years he gave himself diligently to

educational labors, which were often exacting and distasteful. He felt hampered by them, as he believed that his principal mission was literature. He frequently complained of the tedious routine of examining teachers and papers. He made several trips to the Continent to examine the schools and methods of instruction in France and Germany, and his careful, elaborate reports are valuable educational documents. His conception of the end of education was personal worth rather than practical efficiency. "Soberness, righteousness, and wisdom — I cannot consider *that*," he says, "a bad description of the aim of education, and of the motives which should govern us in the choice of studies, whether we are preparing ourselves for a hereditary seat in the English House of Lords or for the pork trade in Chicago."

Arnold was married the year of his appointment as school inspector, and his domestic life was peculiarly happy. His published correspondence contains numerous letters to his wife. He loved children and entered heartily into their enjoyments. "As we think of him," says the editor of his Letters, "endearing traits of character come crowding on the memory, — his merry interest in his friends' concerns; his love of children; his kindness to animals; his absolute freedom from bitterness, rancor, and envy; his unstinted admiration of beauty and cleverness; . . . his childlike pleasure in his own performances — 'Did I say that? How good that was!' . . . He was preëminently a good man; gentle, generous, enduring, laborious; a devoted husband, a most tender father, and unfailing friend."

His literary career began in 1849 with "The Strayed

Reveller, and Other Poems," which was followed three years later by "Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems." In 1853 he published a volume of "Poems," made up principally from his previous works. He had a high conception of the nature of poetry, which he defined as "a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty." He did not believe, as Macaulay and Nordau have held, that poetry would disappear with the full maturity of our race. On the contrary, he maintained that "the future of poetry is immense, because in poetry, where it is worthy of its high destinies, our race, as time goes on, will find an ever surer and surer stay." While insisting on beauty of form, he laid particular stress on truth and value of substance. In one of his sonnets he says that the poet's muse should be —

> "Young, gay,
> Radiant, adorned outside; a hidden ground
> Of thought and of austerity within."

In his poems Arnold endeavored to keep his practice in line with his principles. By a careful and constant perusal of Greek poetry, he largely imbibed its spirit and to some extent followed its models. In the preface to the volume of 1853 he says: "In the sincere endeavor to learn and practise, amid the bewildering confusion of our times, what is sound and true in poetical art, I seemed to myself to find the only sure guidance, the only solid poetry, among the ancients." In a later edition he criticises the vagaries of modern literature as *fantastic*, and wanting in sanity. "Sanity," he says, "that is the

great virtue of the ancient literature; the want of that is the great defect of the modern, in spite of its variety and power."

We cannot assign him a very high rank as a poet — considerably lower, indeed, than he imagined he deserved. "My poems represent, on the whole," he frankly said in one of his letters, "the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century, and thus they will probably have their day as people become conscious to themselves of what that movement of mind is, and interested in the literary productions which reflect it. It might be fairly urged that I have less poetical sentiment than Tennyson, and less intellectual vigor and abundance than Browning; yet, because I have more of a fusion of the two than either of them, and have more regularly applied that fusion to the main line of modern development, I am likely enough to have my turn, as they have had theirs." His poems are lacking in the quality of spontaneity or inevitableness. Few of them have the stamp of melodious perfection. They frequently exhibit subtlety of thought and delicacy of feeling; but the conscious, restrained effort is nearly always discernible. His narrative poems, particularly "Sohrab and Rustum" and "Balder," reflect, in their clearness and dignity of style, the poet's studies in Homer. Both are admirable poems. The closing paragraph of the former, a few lines of which follow, has been justly admired: —

> "For many a league
> The shorn and parcelled Oxus strains along
> Through beds of sand and matted rushy isles, —
> Oxus, forgetting the bright speed he had

In his high mountain cradle in Pamere,
A foiled circuitous wanderer, — till at last
The longed-for dash of waves is heard, and wide
His luminous home of waters opens, bright
And tranquil, from whose floor the new-bathed stars
Emerge, and shine upon the Aral sea."

In "Resignation" Arnold gives expression to his conception of the poetic character:—

"Deeper the poet feels; but he
Breathes, when he will, immortal air.
In the day's life, whose iron round
Hems us all in, he is not bound;
He leaves his kind, o'erleaps their pen,
And flees the common life of men.
He escapes thence, but we abide.
Not deep the poet sees, but wide."

The prevailing tone of his poetry is sad. He had a strong sense of fate and sorrow in human life. In the little poem "A Question," the sad and tragic side of life finds beautiful expression: —

"Joy comes and goes, hope ebbs and flows
Like the wave;
Change doth unknit the tranquil strength of men.
Love lends life a little grace,
A few sad smiles; and then
Both are laid in one cold place, —
In the grave."

The poet felt keenly the unsettled conditions and beliefs of our epoch of change and transition. In "The Future," a poem that treats of the destiny of man, we read: —

"This tract which the river of Time
Now flows through with us, is the plain.
Gone is the calm of its earlier shore.
Bordered by cities, and hoarse
With a thousand cries is its stream.
And we on its breast, our minds
Are confused as the sounds which we hear,
Changing and short as the sights which we see."

We find a similar strain in "The Grande Chartreuse": —

"Achilles ponders in his tent,
The kings of modern thought are dumb;
Silent they are, though not content,
And wait to see the future come.
They have the grief men had of yore,
But they contend and cry no more."

In Arnold's poems there are but few of those felicitous phrases or passages that become popular quotations. In addition to the poems already mentioned, the following are worthy of note: "Stagirius," "Human Life," "In Utrumque Paratus," "Dover Beach," "Lines Written in Kensington Gardens," "The Scholar Gypsy," "Memorial Verses," and "Obermann."

Arnold's poetry, though never widely popular, early established his reputation as a poet; and in 1857 he was elected Professor of Poetry at Oxford — a position he held for ten years. His lectures there, in which he first appears as a critic, were received with favor. In 1861 appeared his work "On Translating Homer," an admirable piece of suggestive criticism. He pointed out as the four chief characteristics of the Greek poet his rapidity, his directness of thought and expression, his simplicity of matter and ideas,

and his nobleness of manner. These qualities the translator, he maintains, ought to reproduce. The leading English translations are tested by these principles and found wanting. Many illustrative passages make the discussion clear and convincing. "Cowper renders him ill because he is slow in his movement and elaborate in his style; Pope renders him ill because he is artificial both in his style and in his words; Chapman renders him ill because he is fantastic in his ideas; Mr. Newman renders him ill because he is odd in his words and ignoble in his manner."

Arnold holds that hexameter is the best metre for rendering Homer. The prejudices at present existing against hexameter will sooner or later pass away. He is not satisfied with precept alone; and to illustrate his critical principles he translates several passages himself. The address of Zeus to the horses of Achilles, Pope renders in the following manner, which Arnold condemns as artificial: —

> "Nor Jove disdained to cast a pitying look
> While thus relenting to the steeds he spoke:
> 'Unhappy coursers of immortal strain!
> Exempt from age and deathless now in vain;
> Did we your race on mortal man bestow
> Only, alas! to share in mortal woe?'"

This passage Arnold turns into hexameter more literally as follows: —

> "And with pity the son of Saturn saw them bewailing,
> And he shook his head, and thus addressed his own bosom:
> 'Ah, unhappy pair, to Peleus why did we give you,
> To a mortal? but ye are without old age and immortal.
> Was it that ye, with man, might have your thousands of sorrows?
> For than man, indeed, there breathes no wretcheder creature,
> Of all living things, that on earth are breathing and moving."

Arnold always bore adverse criticism with equanimity and good humor. His views on translating Homer were attacked in the *Saturday Review;* and writing to his mother about the article, he says: "When first I read a thing of this kind, I am annoyed; then I think how certainly in two or three days the effect of it upon me will have wholly passed off; then I begin to think of the openings it gives for observations in answer, and from that moment, when a free activity of the spirit is restored, my gayety and good spirits return, and the article is simply an object of interest to me. To be able to feel thus, one must not have committed oneself on subjects for which one has no vocation, but must be on ground where one feels at home and secure — that is the great secret of good humor."

In 1865 appeared his "Essays in Criticism," a volume chiefly noted for its first chapter on the function of criticism. Arnold was more than a mere literary artist; beneath all his writings, however urbane in manner, there is a serious purpose. He made criticism mean much more than the inglorious art of finding fault or of displaying the critic's learning. "Its business is," he says, "simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas." Or, as he more briefly defines it elsewhere, criticism is "a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." This places criticism on a high plane, and makes of the competent critic an inspiring teacher and guide.

Arnold was a true patriot. Though he recognized the

superiority of the French in ideas, and of the Germans in learning, his heart was always with his own people. But he recognized their faults, — their narrowness, their inaccessibility to new ideas, and their absorbing interest in material things. He described his literary work as an effort "to pull out a few more stops in that powerful but at present somewhat narrow-toned organ, the modern Englishman." He sought to promote in England a higher type of civilization — a type that rises above sordid, material interests into the region of ideas. "Man is civilized," he said, "when the whole body of society comes to live with a life worthy to be called *humane*, and corresponding to man's true aspirations and powers."

In promoting his purpose he did not use the methods of a stern, logical thinker. He frequently referred, with playful, ironic self-depreciation, to Frederic Harrison's criticism that he was without a "philosophy with coherent, interdependent, subordinate, and derivative principles." It was not in his nature to dispute very obstinately in behalf of his opinions. He followed a lighter, literary method, which gently tries to approach truth on one side after another. "He who will do nothing but fight impetuously toward the Goddess," he said, "on his own, one, favorite, particular line, is inevitably destined to run his head into the folds of the black robe in which she is wrapped."

The volume entitled "Culture and Anarchy," which was published in 1869, is one of his most characteristic works. It furnished most of the words — "culture," "sweetness and light," "Philistine," "Barbarian," "Hebraism and Hellenism" — with which his name and message are associated. To understand these terms, as he used them,

is to possess, in large measure, the secret of Arnold. They embody the ideas that are constantly recurring in his works.

What does he mean by culture? Not a smattering, as Mr. Bright declared, of Latin and Greek, nor an empty book-learning that unfits a man for the commonplace duties of life. Arnold used the word *culture* in a noble sense. He defined it as "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters that most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world." The aim of culture is "sweetness and light," which are identified with "reason and the will of God."

To the great middle class of England Arnold applied the German term *Philistine*, by which he meant a strong, stolid, unenlightened opponent of the children of light. To the nobility he gave the name *Barbarian*, by which he meant to indicate, in spite of outward graces, the lack of real refinement of soul. "Philistine," he says, "gives the notion of something particularly stiff-necked and perverse in the resistance to light and its children; and therein it specially suits our middle class, who not only do not pursue sweetness and light, but who even prefer to them that sort of machinery of business, chapels, tea meetings, and addresses from Mr. Murphy, which makes up the dismal and illiberal life on which I have so often touched. But the aristocratic class has actually, in its well-known politeness, a kind of image or shadow of sweetness; and as for light, if it does not pursue light, it is not that it perversely cherishes some dismal and illiberal existence in preference to light, but it is lured off from following light by those mighty and eternal seducers of our race which weave

for this class their most irresistible charms, — by worldly splendor, security, power and pleasure. . . . Keeping this in view, I have in my own mind often indulged myself with the fancy of employing, in order to designate our aristocratic class, the name of *The Barbarians*."

Two great tendencies in human life he designated as Hellenism and Hebraism. Both aim at human perfection, but along different paths. Hellenism lays stress on intellectual culture; Hebraism on moral culture. "The uppermost idea with Hellenism," he says, "is to see things as they really are; the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience." These tendencies are not exclusive of each other, though a severe conflict is now going on between them. "Hebraism at its best," he says, "is beauty and charm; Hellenism at its best is also beauty and charm. As such they can unite. . . . Both are eminently *humane*, and for complete human perfection both are required; the first being the perfection of that side in us which is moral and acts; the second, of that side in us which is intelligential and perceives and knows."

Arnold was at heart deeply religious. Though in his writings on religion — "St. Paul and Protestantism" (1870), "Literature and Dogma" (1873), and "God and the Bible" (1875) — he strongly assailed some current theological teachings, he firmly believed in God and the moral government of the world. He stoutly resisted the encroachments of materialism and unbelief. His definition of God as "the enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," is well-known. Religion he defines as "that which binds and holds us to the practice of righteousness." He places much stress on what he calls "the

secret and method of Jesus," that is, inward piety and sweet reasonableness.

Though he rejected the miraculous element of the New Testament, he upheld the moral teachings of Christ. He defended St. Paul against Renan. In Christ and his teachings he found the permanent ideal of humanity. "Jesus Christ and his precepts," he said, "are found to hit the moral experience of mankind, to hit it in the critical points, to hit it lastingly; and, when doubts are thrown upon their hitting it, then to come out stronger than ever." In the presence of growing disbelief, he said: "I believe that Christianity will survive because of its natural truth. Those who fancied that they had done with it, those who had thrown it aside because what was presented to them under its name was so unreceivable, will have to return to it again and learn it better." And over against the pessimism of Schopenhauer, he avows his conviction that "human life is a blessing and a benefit, and constantly improvable, because in self-renouncement is a fount of joy, 'springing up into everlasting life.'"

In the fall of 1883 Arnold visited America and spent some months in lecturing in the principal cities. He was cordially received, and his letters show a warm appreciation of American life and American character. He was struck with "the universal enjoyment and good nature." But he missed the English love of quiet and criticised the general restlessness and love of publicity. "It is very fatiguing," he wrote; "I thank God, it only confirms me in the desire 'to hide my life,' as the Greek philosopher recommended, as much as possible." The lectures he delivered, three in number, are contained in the volume

entitled "Discourses in America." They are, for the most part, restatements in refined, popular form of the critical and social teachings found in his other writings. The most interesting of the lectures is the one on "Emerson," in the opening pages of which his style reaches the highest point of lyrical beauty and eloquence. It must be said, however, that he does the transcendental poet and philosopher scant justice. He thought well of these "Discourses in America," and said, shortly before his death, that it "was the book by which, of all his prose writings, he should most wish to be remembered."

There is not space to speak of Arnold's other writings, the most interesting of which is a second series of "Essays in Criticism," published in 1888. It contains a valuable chapter on "The Study of Poetry" and critical reviews of Milton, Gray, Keats, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, and others. He had now well-nigh reached the allotted age of man, and March 15, 1888, he suddenly died at Liverpool, whither he had gone to welcome his daughter on her arrival from America. "To have known him," says a friend, "to have loved him, to have had a place in his regard, is —

'Part of our life's unalterable good.'"

As we review the leading points in Arnold's criticism, on which his fame must chiefly rest, we are impressed with his limitations. His attainments were neither of the widest nor profoundest. What, then, has been the secret of his popularity? First of all his style, though a little too self-conscious and overrefined, is winning and lucid. There is never any difficulty in understanding what he is

driving at, and he labels his principal points with a telling word or phrase. Besides this, he preserved at all times an unruffled sweetness of temper. Even in his most refined cruelty he exhibits a charming urbanity. But most of all, he had a real message to the English people. He earnestly exhorted them to mingle with the pursuit of gain the sweetness and light of genuine culture. The self-confidence or dogmatism often apparent in his manner did not rise from an offensive egotism. The explanation is to be found in his preface to "St. Paul and Protestantism." In what he wrote he believed himself to be an organ for that mighty collective tendency which we call the spirit of the age. Whoever looks upon himself in this light, necessarily speaks "as one having authority."

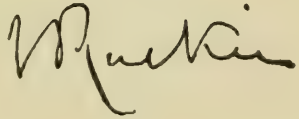
JOHN RUSKIN.

THE restless genius of John Ruskin has led him into many fields of thought. He has been an artist, art critic, author, moralist, sociologist, reformer. He has not been equally great in all these spheres of activity, but he has everywhere been animated by the same valiant and unselfish love of truth. His opinions are not always safe or consistent, and many of his social ideas are strangely impracticable; but whatever he has said or advocated, has come from the depths of a heroic sincerity.

In their ardor for truth and righteousness there was a warm sympathy between Ruskin and Carlyle. Their admiration was mutual. Ruskin called Carlyle master; and Carlyle in return lauds Ruskin's divine ardor against unrighteousness. In a letter to Emerson, the sage of Chelsea writes: "There is nothing going on among us as notable to me as those fierce lightning bolts Ruskin is copiously and desperately pouring into the black world of anarchy all around him. No other man in England that I meet has in him the divine rage against iniquity, falsity, and baseness that Ruskin has, and that every man ought to have." Yet there is a marked difference between these two great teachers. The feminine tenderness and inextinguishable hopefulness of Ruskin stand in marked contrast with the viking fierceness and intolerant pessimism of Carlyle.



Photograph from life.



John Ruskin was born in London, Feb. 8, 1819. His death occurred at Brantwood, Jan. 20, 1900. His father, a wine-merchant, united to a sound, practical judgment an unusual artistic and literary taste. He painted in water-colors; and after the business cares of the day were over, he was accustomed to read aloud to the family the standard English authors. The legend on his tomb says: "He was an entirely honest merchant, and his memory is to all who keep it dear and helpful. His son, whom he loved to the uttermost, and taught to speak the truth, says this of him." Ruskin's mother was a pious, practical, aspiring woman, who ruled her household with diligent strictness. Both parents were Scotch and transmitted to their son the courage and enthusiasm characteristic of the Celtic temperament.

Ruskin's early training lacked sympathy and tenderness. He was denied the usual playthings of children and thrown almost entirely on his own resources for amusement. Thus he learned to observe closely the things about him, — the pattern of the carpet, the scenes from the window, the forms of flower and leaf in the garden. His father and mother seemed to stand at a vast distance above him, like the forces of nature. When he was seven years old, as he tells us, he was, in large measure, mentally independent of his parents, and "began to lead a very small, perky, contented, conceited, Cock-Robinson-Crusoe sort of life."

The moral sense of Ruskin was acute and strong. His parents intended him for the church. It was a matter of deep regret to his father that he turned aside to art and authorship. When a friend once remarked that an

amiable clergyman had thus been lost, his father replied with tears in his eyes, "Yes, he would have been a bishop." As frequently happens, he was encouraged to preach as a child. One of his sermons has been handed down, and is remarkable as containing the substance of a large part of his subsequent teaching: "People, be dood. If you are dood, Dod will love you. If you are not dood, Dod will not love you. People, be dood." This sermon he mentions in his autobiography as exemplary in brevity and in doctrine.

His mother held him inexorably to a long and careful study of the Bible. This training, though often painful to him at the time, he regarded late in life as the most precious part of his education. "My mother forced me," he says in "Præterita," "by steady daily toil, to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year; and to that discipline — patient, accurate, and resolute — I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature." No other recent writer has made so many references to biblical incident and so many applications of biblical truth.

Ruskin's childhood travels were an important influence in his early development. His father travelled for orders two or three months every summer. Accompanied by his wife and son, he travelled leisurely in his post-chaise, and lost no opportunity to visit places of interest. In this way the young Ruskin, before he had reached his teens, had become acquainted with the towns, country-

seats, and natural scenery of nearly all England, Wales, and the lowlands of Scotland. With powers of observation keenly active, he laid up considerable stores of information, and in his diaries began to exercise himself in accurate and brilliant description, which not a few regard as the greatest merit of his subsequent writings.

The thirst of authorship laid hold of Ruskin with unusual violence. He was encouraged in composition by his parents, who paid him at the rate of a penny for twenty lines. Nourished on Scott and Pope, to whom he has always remained loyal, he wrote both prose and poetry with equal facility. Before he was ten years of age, he wrote several volumes, illustrating them with appropriate drawings. His poetry, ambitious in scope and style, clearly shows the influence of Pope. Though he continued to write verse for many years, he was not a poet, and finally perceived, to use his own words, that "he could express nothing rightly in that manner."

Without attending school, Ruskin's education was going on apace. He was taught Latin, Greek, French, and mathematics by excellent private tutors. He took lessons in drawing, in which he made astonishing progress. On his thirteenth birthday he received a copy of Rogers's "Italy," which had been illustrated by Turner. This gift, as he thought, determined the main tenor of his life. Filled with admiration of Turner's drawings, he accepted them as exclusive models. Then followed a family trip to the Continent, during which France, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy were visited. Everywhere the ardent young artist was busy with pen and pencil, accumulating materials for a work which, in a few years, would startle the cultured

circles of England, and exert no small influence on the taste and art of the English people.

Ruskin passionately loved the mountains. As a boy of fourteen he wrote: —

> "There is a thrill of strange delight
> That passes quivering o'er me,
> When blue hills rise upon the sight,
> Like summer clouds before me."

At Schaffhausen he was thrilled with his first view of the Alps, to the forms and structure of which he subsequently devoted so much fond and patient study. The impression of this first view was never forgotten, and in his autobiography the scene is vividly recalled. "The Alps," he says, "were clear as crystal, sharp in the pure horizon sky, and already tinged with rose by the sinking sun. Infinitely beyond all that we had ever thought or dreamed — the seen walls of lost Eden could not have been more beautiful to us; not more awful, round heaven, the walls of sacred Death." This sight of the Alps was a new revelation to him of the beauty of the earth, the proclamation of which he joyfully recognized as a part of his mission to men.

Ruskin was a worshipper of nature. Every natural object had a peculiar charm for him. With equal delight he studied the graceful curvings of the blades of grass, the terrific approach and passing of the storm, and the tumultuous sublimity of the surging ocean. No other writer has had a richer insight into the hidden beauties of nature, or pointed out its charms in diviner language. Unlike Carlyle, who esteemed the world a waste without

human affection, he found a genuine and satisfying companionship in mountain, wood, and stream. These were to him sources of perpetual inspiration and instruction — "the light of all that he rightly learned."

In 1836 he matriculated at Christ Church, Oxford, as a gentleman-commoner. His genius and amiability won him the respect of his aristocratic associates, several of whom afterward became quite distinguished. His moral life was innocently exemplary; for, as he records, he had never touched a card, looked upon dice with horror, and had no taste for hunting or racing. The historic buildings interested him. The ancient languages, in which he never attained scholarly proficiency, he studied, not for their grammar, but their literature. He became quite proficient in mathematics and interested himself in natural science, to which the university was just beginning to accord some recognition. His skill in English composition early made itself recognized, and, after two unsuccessful efforts, he won the prize in poetry.

In his autobiography he gives an amusing account of an essay which he was appointed to read before the body of students. The incident throws light on the university life of the time. He was an excellent reader and acquitted himself to his entire satisfaction. He descended from the rostrum to receive, as he confidently expected, the thanks of the gentlemen-commoners, whom he felt he had so creditably represented. But he was cruelly undeceived. "Not in envy, truly," he says, "but in fiery disdain, varied in expression through every form and manner of English language, they explained to me that I had committed grossest *lèse majesté* against the order

of gentlemen-commoners; that no gentleman-commoner's essay ought ever to contain more than twelve lines, with four words in each; and that, even indulging to my folly, and conceit, and want of *savoir-faire*, the impropriety of writing an essay with any meaning in it, like vulgar students, — the thoughtlessness and audacity of writing one that would take at least a quarter of an hour to read, and then reading it all, might for this once be forgiven to such a greenhorn, but that Coventry wasn't the word for the place I should be sent to if ever I did such a thing again."

Though some of his previous writings had found their way into print, Ruskin's literary career properly began, while an undergraduate at Oxford, with "The Poetry of Architecture." It consisted of a series of articles contributed to Loudon's *Architectural Magazine* under the *nom de plume* of "Kata Phusin" — according to nature — which indicates their standpoint. It is a discussion of cottage and villa architecture in England, France, Switzerland, and Italy, for which his frequent journeys and well-filled sketch-books supplied abundant materials. He regarded architecture in England as at a low ebb. The work, certainly a remarkable production for an undergraduate, exhibited in no small degree the tone and principles of his later works on the same subject.

In 1842, after finishing his course at the university, and making another studious tour on the Continent, Ruskin began his career as a critic of art. His attainments were extraordinary for a young man of twenty-three. Stimulated by Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero-Worship," he was ready to attempt a noteworthy

achievement in art. An occasion was not lacking. Turner had been attacked as untrue to nature; and with a truly chivalrous spirit, the young enthusiast championed the cause of his master. The result was the "Modern Painters," the first volume of which appeared early in 1843.

The work created a storm. It boldly attacked popular favorites; it set at defiance the conventional principles of art; it preached fidelity to nature, not only in its outward forms, but in its invisible spirit. It was confident and intolerant in tone. Yet it was written with such fulness of knowledge and such eloquence of description that, in spite of its iconoclastic audacity, it was widely read. It was attacked, but not refuted. Before the fifth and last volume appeared, seventeen years later, the "Modern Painters" had profoundly influenced popular taste, in large measure hushed the hostile criticism of Turner, and in fact created a new era in the art criticism of England.

Ruskin's knowledge of art broadened and deepened. Other trips to the Continent gave him an opportunity to "walk with Nature" among the Alps. In Italy he became enamoured of Christian art and studied some of the "old masters," particularly Angelico and Tintoret, with absorbing enthusiasm. He was always discovering some great, forgotten artist. During the winter of 1845 he wrote the second volume of "Modern Painters," to expound the nature of beauty, and to explain the old Florentine and Venetian schools of painting. Though the most philosophical of all his writings, it abounds in beautiful passages. On its publication Sydney Smith set the pace for the critical world by pronouncing it a work of

"transcendent talent, presenting the most original views in the most eloquent and powerful language, which would work a complete revolution in the world of taste."

The work of composition was not to him, as to Carlyle, a painful drudgery. He went to his work with well-filled note-books and well-defined ideas. "My literary work," he tells us, "was always done as quietly and methodically as a piece of tapestry. I knew exactly what I had got to say, put the words firmly in their places like so many stitches, hemmed the edges of chapters round with what seemed to me graceful flourishes, touched them finally with my cunningest points of color, and read the work to papa and mamma at breakfast the next morning, as a girl shows her sampler." Tears of joy on the cheeks of the old people were his usual reward.

Ruskin was accustomed to say playfully, yet half seriously, that Saturn presided at his birth. Certainly an untoward influence dominated his love affairs and domestic relations. His youth was not without its romance, which ended in disappointment and illness. In 1848 he married a beautiful Scotch maiden, for whom, some years previously, he had written the fairy tale "The King of the Golden River." Unfortunately there was no deep affection on either side; and after a half-dozen discordant and unhappy years she left him. Though the tongue of scandal was not silent, his high-bred delicacy has never allowed him to write a word in defence of himself or in censure of others.

The year following his ill-starred marriage appeared one of his most popular works, "The Seven Lamps of Architecture." It points out the close relation between morality

and art, and is a noble plea for sincerity and truth. "However mean or inconsiderable the act," he says, "there is something in the well doing of it which has fellowship with the noblest forms of manly virtue; and the truth, decision, and temperance, which we reverently regard as honorable conditions of the spiritual being, have a representative or derivative influence over the works of the hand, the movements of the frame, and the action of the intellect." Though extreme sometimes in the application of his principles, he is always admirable in his zeal for truth.

The following years were very busy and fruitful. Grieved at the divided condition of Protestantism, he wrote his "Notes on the Construction of Sheepfolds" (not a few prosaic farmers bought it under a misapprehension), in which he made a plea for greater toleration and unity in religion. He espoused the cause of the new school of painters — Hunt, Millais, Collins, Rossetti — who broke away from conventionalism to return to nature. His pen now carried with it great weight. In the face of the ridicule heaped on the new school, he wrote a pamphlet entitled "Pre-Raphaelitism." For several years he was regarded as the leader of the Pre-Raphaelites. But the principal work of this period was "The Stones of Venice," the first volume of which appeared in 1851 and the two remaining volumes in 1853. The purpose of the book, for which he had made laborious studies in Venice, was to trace the relation between the architecture and the social and religious life of a people. The principle is enunciated — and it runs through a large part of our author's writings — that "all art is great, and good, and true, only so far as it is

distinctively the work of *manhood* in its entire and highest sense."

After completing "The Stones of Venice," Ruskin entered a new field, to which we owe some of his most charming works. He became a popular lecturer. In the fall of 1853 he delivered a course of lectures before the Philosophical Society of Edinburgh on "Architecture and Painting." The lectures present in brief, popular form the views more fully expounded in his previous works. He interspersed the reading of his carefully prepared manuscript with extemporaneous comment in colloquial form — the two styles standing in somewhat violent contrast.

The year 1860 marks an important change in Ruskin's writings. With the fifth volume of "Modern Painters" finished this year, he closed his series of great works devoted to art. Now, at the age of forty, life assumed for him a deeper meaning. His horizon greatly broadened; and in place of an artist and critic, he became an ethical teacher and social reformer. Henceforth his great resources of artistic knowledge were used chiefly to illustrate and enforce moral lessons. His sense of evil deepened, and with prophetic fervor he inveighed against every form of iniquity.

In 1860 he wrote four essays on political economy, which were published in the *Cornhill Magazine*. They are entitled "Unto this Last." Though violently reprobated at the time — Thackeray had to cut the series short — they were regarded by their author as "the truest, rightest-worded, and most serviceable things" that he had written. They contain in brief compass Ruskin's views

on social science. "Munera Pulveris," written a year later, is only a more expanded treatment of the same subject. He defines political economy as the science "which teaches nations to desire and labor for the things that lead to life, and which teaches them to scorn and destroy the things that lead to destruction." The highest form of wealth consists, not in accumulating houses and lands, but in "producing as many as possible full-breathed, bright-eyed, and happy-hearted human creatures."

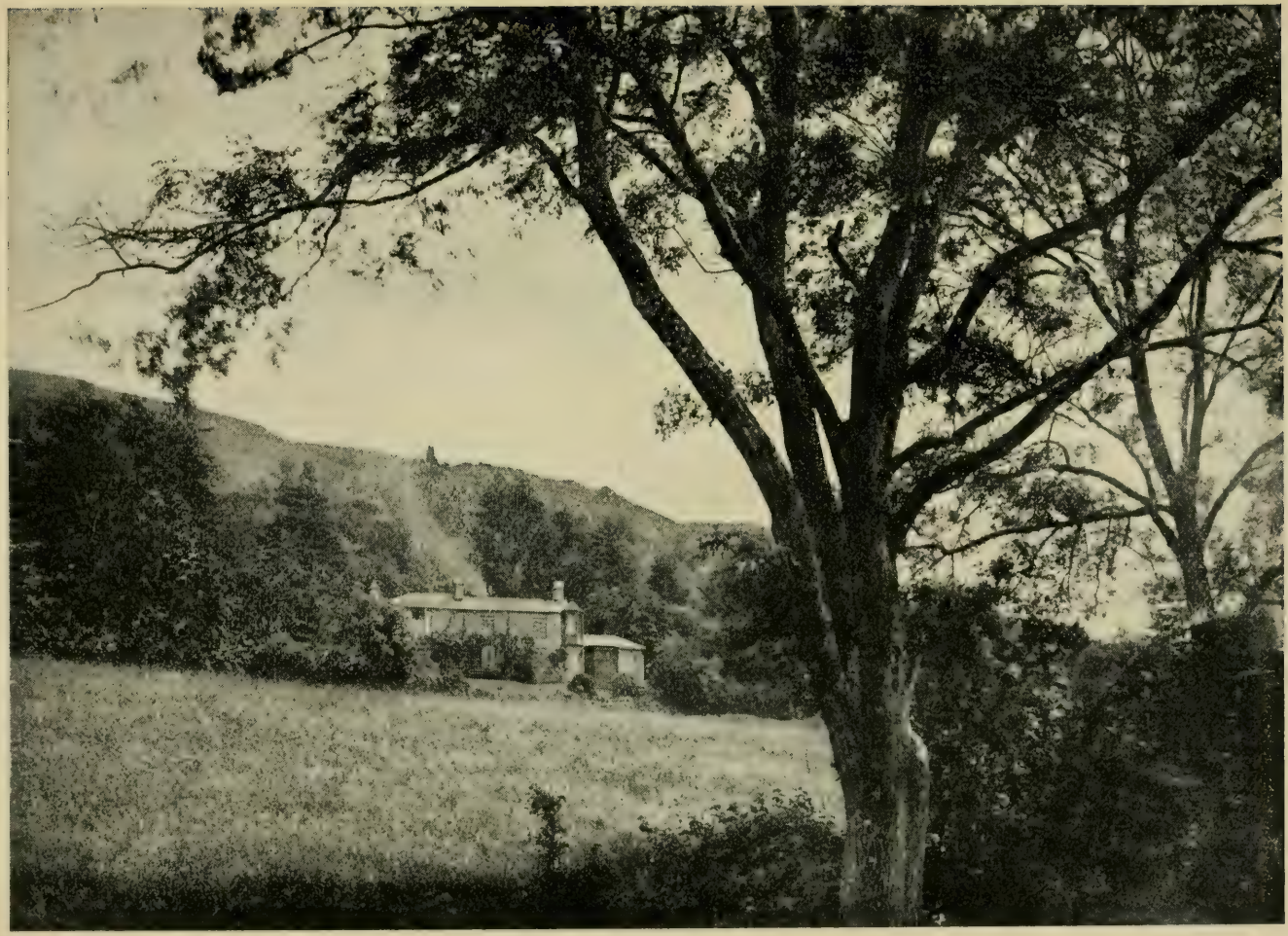
The most popular of all Ruskin's works is "Sesame and Lilies," published in 1864. It consists of three lectures on reading, woman's education, and the mystery of life. These lectures were written with great earnestness, and are filled with sage counsel and noble thought. In them Ruskin gave of his best. In the last, which is pervaded by a pathetic sadness, he declares the purpose of life to be service. "The greatest of all the mysteries of life, and the most terrible," he says, "is the corruption of even the sincerest religion, which is not founded on rational, effective, humble, and helpful action. Helpful action, observe! for there is just one law, which obeyed, keeps all religions pure — forgotten, makes them all false. Whenever in any religious faith, dark or bright, we allow our minds to dwell upon the points in which we differ from other people, we are wrong, and in the devil's power."

Another deservedly popular work, which appeared the year after "Sesame and Lilies," is "The Crown of Wild Olive." It is likewise made up of lectures, which treat of work, traffic, and war. Two years later appeared "Time and Tide," a series of twenty-five letters to a work-

ingman, in which Ruskin expressed his views fully and fearlessly on a variety of subjects — coöperation, contentment, pleasure, education, marriage — that he thought might be helpful to the laboring classes of England. It should not be passed over by any one who would understand his social and ethical views. It sets forth an ideal state of society, which must wait yet a long time for realization.

Ruskin was an educational reformer. Many views advocated by him three or four decades ago have since been adopted in the schools of England and America. He favored popular education and emphasized the importance of physical training. He argued for a closer relation between the courses of study and the duties of practical life. He attached chief importance to the ethical element of education, which he defined as "the leading human souls to what is best, and making what is best out of them." He favored the higher education of women, and pronounced it foolishly wrong to think of her only as "the shadow and attendant image of her lord, owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience, and supported altogether in her weakness by the preëminence of his fortitude."

The career of our author cannot be followed further in detail. As long as his health permitted, he continued to lead the same laborious life. He gave much time to botany and geology. Almost every year he delivered lectures enough to make a volume. In 1869 he was elected Slade Professor of Fine Arts at Oxford, a position to which, during the three terms of his incumbency, he devoted much conscientious labor. His first course was entitled "Lectures on Art," in which, among other things, he dis-



HOME OF JOHN RUSKIN.

Brantwood, Coniston.

And thou henceforth wilt have a good man's calm,
A great man's happiness; thy zeal shall find
Repose at length, firm friend of human kind.

cusses the relation of art to religion, to morals, and to use. This work is noteworthy as presenting his matured views in careful academic form. Other courses are called "Aratra Pentelici" and "The Pleasures of England."

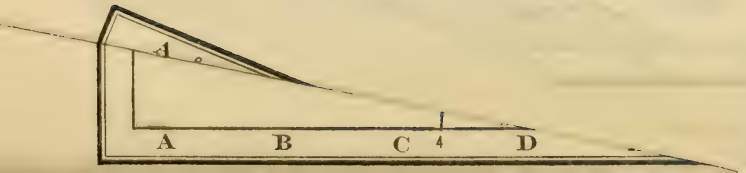
In 1871 Ruskin purchased a property in the Lake District, known as Brantwood, and picturesquely situated on Coniston Water. He fitted it up tastefully and lived there until his death. On its walls may be seen choice engravings and paintings, — a Dürer, two or three old Venetian heads, and Hunts, Prouts, and Turners in abundance. Here he wrote "Præterita," an autobiography that brings before us the earlier part of his life with wonderful vividness. His last years, so full of varied and important interests, have been clouded by repeated attacks of mental disease. At last the giant has been forced to yield — the zealous prophet to hush his voice; and, soothed by the tenderness that reverent love inspires, he has answered his summons home.

In forming an estimate of his work, it must be admitted that Ruskin had too much ardor to be a judicious critic. He has sometimes allowed his affections or his prejudices to sway his judgment; he has sometimes taken extreme and untenable positions. His vivid imagination has showed only what he wanted to see. While holding many advanced or radical ideas, he has been essentially a Tory and conservative. He had a romantic sympathy with the Middle Ages. He had an unreasonable prejudice against America; and his love of art and nature made him unfriendly to the commercial and manufacturing developments of the century.

He had no small share of the eccentricity of genius.

This fact is seen, not only in the impracticable character of some of his social reforms, but also in the singular freaks in which he sometimes indulged. While a professor of fine arts at Oxford he took lessons in stone-breaking, and then went with his students to mend a piece of muddy road. "But the quite happiest bit of manual work I ever did," he tells us in "Præterita," "was for my mother in the old inn at Sixt, where she alleged the stone staircase to have become unpleasantly dirty since last year. Nobody in the inn appearing to think it possible to wash it, I brought the necessary buckets of water from the yard myself, poured them into beautiful image of Versailles water-works down the fifteen or twenty steps of the great staircase, and with the strongest broom I could find cleaned every step into its corners. It was quite lovely work to dash the water and drive the mud from each, with accumulating splash, down to the next one."

But whatever faults or limitations may be discovered in Ruskin, he stands as one of the great figures of English literature in the Victorian Age. His rich gifts were unselfishly devoted, in many ways, to the uplifting and advancement of his fellow-men. Nearly the whole of his inherited fortune of a million dollars was spent in benevolent enterprises and in charity. In a style unsurpassed in richness of diction and eloquence of form, he bravely upheld what he regarded as truth, not only in art, but also in the lives of men.


A
B
C
D

INDEX TO MAP.

Author.	Birthplace (b).		Abiding-Place while Writing (l).		Place of Death (d).	
Addison	Milston.	G—12	London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Arnold, Matthew	Laleham.	I—12	Harrow.	H—11	Liverpool.	E— 7
Bacon	London.	I—11	St. Albans.	I—11	London.	I—11
Brontë	Thornton.	F— 6	Haworth.	F— 6	Haworth.	F— 6
Browning, E. B.	Durham.	G— 4	London. I—11 Florence, Italy.		Florence, Italy.	
Browning, Robert	London.	I—11	London. I—11 Florence, Italy.		Venice, Italy.	
Bunyan	Elstow.	I—10	Bedford.	I—10	London.	I—11
Burns	Ayr.	C— 2	Ayrshire. C—2 Edinburgh. E—1 Dumfries. D—3		Dumfries.	D— 3
Byron	London.	I—11	Newstead Abbey G—8 Switzerland and Italy.		Missolonghi, Greece.	
Carlyle	Ecclefechan.	E— 3	London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Chaucer	London.	I—11	London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Coleridge	Ottery St. Mary	D—13	Keswick.	E— 4	London.	I—11
Cowper	Great Berkhamptonstead.	I—11	Olney.	H—10	East Dereham.	J— 9
De Quincey	Manchester.	F— 7	Grasmere. E—4 Edinburgh. E—1		Edinburgh.	E— 1
Dickens	Landport.	H—13	London.	I—11	Gadshill.	J—12
Dryden	Aldwinkle.	I— 9	London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Eliot	Nuneaton.	G— 9	London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Gibbon	Putney.	I—11	London. I—11 Lausanne, Switzerland.		London.	I—11
Goldsmith	Pallas, Ireland.		London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Johnson, Samuel	Lichfield.	G— 9	London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Macaulay	Rothley Temple.	H— 8	London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Milton	London.	I—11	Horton. H—11 London. I—11		London.	I—11
Pope	London.	I—11	London. I—11 Twickenham. I—11		Twickenham.	I—11
Ruskin	London.	I—11	London. I—11 Brantwood. E— 5		Brantwood.	E—5
Scott	Edinburgh.	E— 1	Abbotsford.	E— 2	Abbotsford.	E— 2
Shakespeare	Stratford-on-Avon.	G—10	London.	I—11	Stratford-on-Avon.	G—10
Shelley	Field Place.	I—13	Bishopsgate. I—12 Switzerland and Italy.		Bay of Spezia, Italy.	
Spenser	London.	I—11	London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Swift	Dublin, Ireland.		London. I—11 Dublin, Ireland.		Dublin, Ireland.	
Tennyson	Somersby.	I— 7	Farringford. G—13 Aldworth. H—12		Aldworth.	H—12
Thackeray	Calcutta, India.		London.	I—11	London.	I—11
Wordsworth	Cockermouth.	E— 4	Grasmere. E—4 Rydal Mount. E—4		Rydal Mount.	E— 4


MAP LOCATING THE BIRTH PLACE, ABIDING PLACE WHILE WRITING, AND PLACE OF DEATH OF MANY OF THE AUTHORS TREATED AT LENGTH IN THIS BOOK.
(Use index upon opposite page)
SCALE OF MILES
0 10 20 30 40 50 60
SCOTLAND
IRELAND
NORTH CHANNEL
IRISH SEA
ST. GEORGE'S CHANNEL
ENGLISH CHANNEL
NORTH SEA
Edinburgh
Scott b. 1771
DeQuincey d.1859
Glasgow
R. Clyde
Ayr
Burns b.1758
Firth of Clyde
ARRAN
CANTYRE
HOLY I.
Abbotsford
Scott d. 1832
Melrose
R. Tweed
Berwick
Ecclefechan
Carlyle b. 1795
NORTHUMBERLAND
Dumfries
Burns d.1796
Solway Firth
Carlisle
Mull of Galloway
Cockermouth
Wordsworth b.1770
Keswick
Coleridge
CUMBERLAND
Grasmere
Wordsworth
DeQuincey
Rydal Mount
Wordsworth
d.1850
WESTMORLAND
Appleby
R. Tees
Durham
Browning E. B.
b.1806
DURHAM
Newcastle
R. Tyne
ISLE OF MAN
Bradshaw
Ruskin
d. 1900
WALNEY I.
Morecambe Bay
Lancaster
YORK
Flamborough Hd.
Haworth
Bronte d.1855
Bronte b.1816
Thoraton
York
R. Ouse
R. Humber
Spurn Hd.
Humber Mouth
Liverpool
Arnold d.1888
Manchester
DeQuincey
b.1735
R. Mersey
LANCASHIRE
Somersby
Tennyson b.1809
LINCOLN
Lincoln
HOLY I.
ANGLESEY
Beaumaris
Denbigh
Carnarvon
CARNARVON
DENBIGH
Mold
R. Dee
CHESHIRE
Chester
DERBY
Newstead Abbey
Byron l.
Derby
NOTTINGHAM
R. Trent
The Wash
CARDIGAN
MERIONETH
Dolgelly
Cardigan Bay
Welchpool
MONTGOMERY
STAFFORD
Stafford
Shrewsbury
SHROPSHIRE
Lichfield
Johnson b.1709
Nottingham
Rothley Temple
Macaulay b.1800
RUTLAND
LEICESTER
Leicester
Oakham
NORFOLK
East Dereham
Cowper d.1800
Norwich
Ouse R.
CAMBRIDGE
Huntingdon
Aldwinkle
Dryden b.1631
Coventry
Eliot b.1819
WARWICK
NORTHAMPTON
Warwick
Northampton
Olney
Cowper
Bedford
Bunyan
b.1628
Cambridge
SUFFOLK
Ipswich
RADNOR
New Radnor
WORCESTER
Worcester
HEREFORD
Stratford
on Avon
Shakespeare
b.1564 d.1616
Cardigan
St. Davids Hd.
PEMBROKE
CARMARTHEN
Carmarthen
BRECKNOCK
Brecon
Hereford
Milford Haven
Haverfordwest
Monmouth
MONMOUTH
GLAMORGAN
Cardiff
R. Severn
GLOUCESTER
Gloucester
Buckingham
OXFORD
Oxford
BUCKINGHAM
HERTFORD
Hertford
ESSEX
St. Albans
Bacon l.
Chelmsford
Great Berkhamptonsted
Cowper b.1731
Horton
Milton
BERKSHIRE
LONDON
Mouth of the Thames
SHEPPEY
Thames
Gibbon
Hogarth
Rochester
Dickens d.1870
BRISTOL CHANNEL
LUNDY I.
WILTSHIRE
Bishopsgate
Shelley l.
Arnold b.1822
Pope
Putney
Fielding
b.1707
Richmond
Thomson
b.1700
Pope
d.1744
Gibbon
b.1737
SURREY
Guildford
Aldworth
Tennyson
Haslemere
l.d.1892
KENT
Maidstone
SOMERSET
Taunton
Addison b.1672
Salisbury
HAMPSHIRE
Winchester
Field Place
Shelley
Horsham
SUSSEX
Lewes
Ottery-St.-Mary
Coleridge b.1772
DEVON
Exeter
DORSET
Dorchester
Beachy Hd.
STRAIT OF DOVER
Bodmin
CORNWALL
Lyme Bay
Bill of Portland
PORTLAND I.
Portsmouth
Freshwater
Tennyson l.
ISLE OF WIGHT
Dickens b.1812
Lands End
Eddystone Light Ho.
Lizard Hd.
C. de la Hague
ALDERNEY
GUERNSEY
CHANNEL
ISLANDS
JERSEY
FRANCE

APPENDIX.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

A BRIEF list of works of reference, including important review and magazine articles, is here appended for the general and special study of English literature. The list is longer than any one, except a specialist, is likely to need. The emphasis of study should be placed, not on what critics have said about an author, but on what the author himself has written. A good biography or two, with several review articles, will usually be found sufficient to place the student in a position for the serious study of a great writer. Elaborate lists of reference will be found in Welsh's "English Masterpiece Course," and in Poole's "Index."

GENERAL WORKS.

Green's "History of the English People."
Macaulay's "History of England."
Turner's "History of the Anglo-Saxons."
Palgrave's "History of the Anglo-Saxons."
Conybeare's "Illustrations of Anglo-Saxon Poetry."
Corson's "Handbook of Anglo-Saxon and Early English."
Marsh's "Origin and History of the English Language."
Lounsbury's "History of the English Language."
Warton's "History of English Poetry."
Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry."
Brooke's "History of Early English Literature."
Morley's "English Writers."
Taine's "English Literature."
Morley's "English Men of Letters."
Robertson's "Great Writers."
Bascom's "Philosophy of English Literature."
"Encyclopedia Britannica."

Chaucer.

Skeat's "Works of Chaucer."
Morris's "Chaucer."
Lounsbury's "Studies in Chaucer."
Ward's "Life of Chaucer" (English Men of Letters).
Lowell's "My Study Windows."
Edinburgh Review, vol. 3 : 437 (Sir Walter Scott).
Atlantic Monthly, 40 : 270 (Lounsbury).
Littell's Living Age, 110 : 738 (Brooke).

Spenser.

Hillard's "Spenser's Works."
Todd's "Spenser's Works."
Church's "Life of Spenser" (English Men of Letters).
Whipple's "Literature of the Age of Elizabeth."
Lowell's "Among My Books."
Edinburgh Review, 7 : 203 (Sir Walter Scott).
Littell's Living Age, 141 : 771 (Dowden). Also 145 : 814; 164 : 579; 209 : 154.

Shakespeare.

Hudson's or Rolfe's "Shakespeare."
Wilder's "Life of Shakespeare."
Dowden's "Shakespeare, His Mind and Art."
Hudson's "Shakespeare, His Life, Art, and Characters."
Knight's "Life of Shakespeare."
Jameson's (Mrs.) "Characteristics of Women."
Lewes's "Women of Shakespeare" (Translated from German).
Ulrici's "Shakespeare's Dramatic Art."
Winter's "Shakespeare's England."
Coleridge's "Lectures and Notes on Shakespeare."
White's "Studies in Shakespeare."
Corson's "Introduction to the Study of Shakespeare."
Atlantic Monthly, 55 : 387 (Clapp); 3 : 111 (Lowell).
Century Magazine, 29 : 780.
Littell's Living Age, 148 : 792; 165 : 405 (Dowden).

Bacon.

Montagu's "Works of Bacon."
Craik's "Bacon, His Writings and His Philosophy."

Nichol's "Francis Bacon: His Life and Philosophy."
Church's "Life of Bacon" (English Men of Letters).
Whately's "Bacon's Essays with Annotations."
Macaulay's "Essay on Bacon."
Whipple's "Literature of the Age of Elizabeth."
North American Review, 56: 59 (Bowen); 93: 149 (Giles).
Littell's Living Age, 69: 515; 78: 579; 139: 91.

MILTON.

Masson's "Life and Times of Milton."
Pattison's "Life of Milton" (English Men of Letters).
Garnett's "Life of Milton" (Great Writers Series).
Matthew Arnold's "Mixed Essays."
Channing's "Character and Writings of Milton."
Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."
Macaulay's "Essay on Milton."
Lowell's "Among My Books."
Addison's "Spectator."
North American Review, 47: 56 (Emerson).
Littell's Living Age, 118: 643 (Bayne); 125: 323 (Pattison).
New Englander, 42: 196 (Himes).
Century Magazine, 14: 53 (M. Arnold).

BUNYAN.

Southey's "Life of Bunyan."
Brown's "John Bunyan: His Life, Times, and Work."
Froude's "Life of Bunyan" (English Men of Letters).
Venable's "Life of Bunyan" (Great Writers Series).
Cheever's "Lectures on the Life and Times of Bunyan."
Macaulay's "Essay on Bunyan."
North American Review, 36: 449.
Littell's Living Age, 33: 153; 171: 276 (Goldwin Smith).

DRYDEN.

Mitford's "Dryden's Works."
Saintsbury's "Life of Dryden" (English Men of Letters).
Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."
Macaulay's "Essay on Dryden."
Lowell's "Among My Books."
Littell's Living Age, 45: 432; 139: 579; 185: 312 (Evans).

ADDISON.

Courthope's "Life of Addison" (English Men of Letters).
Carruthers's "Pope's Life and Letters."
Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."
Dobson's "Life of Steele."
De Quincey's "Literary Reminiscences."
Thackeray's "English Humorists."
Macaulay's "Essays."
North American Review, 79 : 90 (Tuckerman) ; 64 : 314 (Peabody).
Century Magazine, 26 : 703 (Oliphant).
Littell's Living Age, 105 : 819 ; 170 : 776.

POPE.

Carruthers's "Pope's Life and Letters."
Stephen's "Life of Pope" (English Men of Letters).
Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."
Thackeray's "English Humorists."
Lowell's "My Study Windows."
Scribner's Magazine, 3 : 533 (Dobson).
Littell's Living Age, 65 : 330 ; 98 : 643 (Oliphant) ; 163 : 515, 613 ; 184 : 195 (Traill).

SWIFT.

Orrery's "Life and Writings of Swift."
Craik's "Life of Swift."
Scott's "Life of Swift."
Stephen's "Life of Swift" (English Men of Letters).
Johnson's "Lives of the Poets."
Thackeray's "English Humorists."
Macaulay's "Essays."
North American Review, 106 : 68 ; 123 : 170 (Hill).
Littell's Living Age, 45 : 303 (Masson) ; 128 : 515 ; 104 : 707 ; 95 : 369.

JOHNSON.

Boswell's "Life of Johnson."
Stephen's "Life of Johnson" (English Men of Letters).
Grant's "Samuel Johnson" (Great Writers Series).
Carlyle's "Boswell's Life of Johnson."
Macaulay's "Essay on Johnson."

Harper's Magazine, 14 : 483 (Macaulay) ; 82 : 927 (Besant).
Edinburgh Review, 7 : 436 (Jeffrey).
Littell's Living Age, 138 : 86 (M. Arnold) ; 138 : 541 (Cyples) ; 121 : 91 (Stephen) ; 164 : 425 (Birrell) ; 163 : 803 (Gosse).

Goldsmith.

Forster's "Life and Times of Goldsmith."
Irving's "Life of Goldsmith."
Black's "Life of Goldsmith" (English Men of Letters).
Dobson's "Life of Goldsmith" (Great Writers Series).
Macaulay's "Essays."
Thackeray's "English Humorists."
North American Review, 45 : 91 (Channing) ; 8 : 309 (Dana).
Littell's Living Age, 18 : 345 (Lytton) ; 43 : 531.

Gibbon.

Morison's "Life of Gibbon" (English Men of Letters).
Gibbon's "Autobiography."
Atlantic Monthly, 41 : 99 (Howells).
19th Century, 36 : 146 (F. Harrison).
Littell's Living Age, 53 : 449 (Rogers) ; 35 : 417 ; 203 : 669 ; 210 : 416.

Cowper.

Taylor's "Life of Cowper."
Wright's "Life of William Cowper."
Smith's "Life of Cowper" (English Men of Letters).
North American Review, 38 : 1 (Peabody) ; 44 : 29 (Channing) ; 2 : 233 (W. Phillips) ; 19 : 435 (Ware).
Littell's Living Age, 110 : 67 (Forrest) ; 110 : 376 ; 127 : 323 ; 86 : 563 ; 72 : 259 ; 182 : 659 (Bailey) ; 189 : 546 (Rae) ; 191 : 815 (Bailey) ; 204 : 195 (Alice Law).

Burns.

Lockhart's "Life of Robert Burns."
Chambers's "Life and Works of Robert Burns."
Shairp's "Life of Burns" (English Men of Letters).
Blackie's "Life of Robert Burns" (Great Writers Series).
Carlyle's "Essay on Burns."
North American Review, 42 : 66 (Peabody) ; 143 : 427 (W. Whitman).

Littell's Living Age, 113 : 3 ; 206 : 515 (Price).
Atlantic Monthly, 44 : 502 (Shairp) ; 6 : 385 (N. Hawthorne).

SCOTT.

Lockhart's "Life of Scott."
Hutton's "Life of Scott" (English Men of Letters).
Yonge's "Life of Scott" (Great Writers Series).
Carlyle's "Essay on Scott."
Irving's "Abbotsford."
Hunnewell's "Lands of Scott."
Lang's "Letters to Dead Authors."
North American Review, 32 : 386 (Peabody) ; 46 : 431 (Prescott); 87 : 293 (Brown) ; 99 : 580 (H. James, Jr.).
19th Century, 7 : 941 (Ruskin).
Littell's Living Age, 110 : 579 (Stephen) ; 139 : 298 (Wedgewood) : 96 : 541 ; 188 : 177 (Rae) ; 205 : 515.
Harper's Magazine, 44 : 321 (Conway).
Atlantic Monthly, 60 : 134 ; 69 : 139.

BYRON.

Moore's "Life of Byron."
Nichol's "Life of Byron" (English Men of Letters).
Noel's "Life of Lord Byron" (Great Writers Series).
Arnold's (Matthew) "Essays in Criticism."
Macaulay's "Essays."
Bayne's "Essays in Biography and Criticism."
Dowden's "Studies in Literature."
Scott's "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays."
Lowell's "Among My Books."
North American Review, 31 : 167 (Peabody) ; 5 : 98 (Phillips).
Edinburgh Review, 27 : 277 (Jeffrey).
Littell's Living Age, 149 : 131 ; 114 : 387.

WORDSWORTH.

Knight's "Life of Wordsworth" (3 vols.).
Symington's "Wordsworth, His Life and Works."
Myers's "Life of Wordsworth" (English Men of Letters).
Coleridge's "Works."
De Quincey's "Literary Reminiscences."
Hutton's "Essays in Literary Criticism."

Lowell's "My Study Windows."
Stephen's "Hours in a Library."
Littell's Living Age, 128 : 195 (Dowden) ; 121 : 323 (Pater) ; 142 : 323 (M. Arnold) ; 184 : 123 (Bromley) ; 207 : 336.
19th Century, 26 : 435 (Minto) ; 15 : 583 (Swinburne).
Atlantic Monthly, 45 : 241 (Cranch).
North American Review, 59 : 352 (Whipple).

Coleridge.

Campbell's "Samuel Taylor Coleridge."
Traill's "Life of Coleridge" (English Men of Letters).
Caine's "Life of Coleridge" (Great Writers Series).
Carlyle's "Life of Sterling."
De Quincey's "Literary Reminiscences."
Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria."
Bayne's "Essays in Biography and Criticism."
Atlantic Monthly, 45 : 843 (Lathrop).
Edinburgh Review, 28 : 488 (Hazlitt).
Littell's Living Age, 98 : 515 ; 111 : 643 ; 167 : 515 ; 164 : 557 ; 163 : 433 ; 183 : 131 (Dowden).

Shelley.

Dowden's "Life of Shelley."
Symond's "Life of Shelley" (English Men of Letters).
Sharp's "Life of Shelley" (Great Writers Series).
Shelley's (Mrs.) "Shelley Memorials."
De Quincey's "Essays on the Poets."
Calvert's "Coleridge, Shelley, and Goethe."
Rabbe's "Shelley : the Man and the Poet."
Mark Twain's "Defence of Harriet Shelley" in "How to Tell a Story, and Other Essays."
Trelawny's "Records of Shelley, Byron, and the Author."
Atlantic Monthly, 70 : 106, 391 (Scudder) ; 59 : 559.
Century Magazine, 22 : 622 (Woodberry).
North American Review, 146 : 104 (Gannett).
Littell's Living Age, 155 : 387 ; 176 : 323 (M. Arnold).

De Quincey.

Page's "De Quincey's Life and Writings."
Masson's "Life of De Quincey" (English Men of Letters).

De Quincey's "Literary Reminiscences."
Stephen's "Hours in a Library."
Bayne's "Essays in Biography and Criticism."
Japp's "De Quincey Memorials."
Atlantic Monthly, 12 : 345 (Alden) ; 40 : 569 (Lathrop).
North American Review, 88 : 113 (Phillips) ; 74 : 425 (Brown).
Century Magazine, 19 : 853 (Japp).
Harper's Monthly, 80 · 446 (Hogg).
Littell's Living Age, 57 : 918 ; 68 : 323, 451 ; 109 : 278 (Stephen) ; 170 : 707 (Japp).

Macaulay.

Trevelyan's "Life and Letters of Macaulay."
Morison's "Life of Macaulay" (English Men of Letters).
Arnold's (M.) "Mixed Essays."
McCarthy's "History of Our Own Times."
Harrison's "Early Victorian Literature."
Bayne's "Essays in Biography and Criticism."
Harper's Monthly, 53 : 85, 238 (Stoddard) ; 58 : 605 (Lloyd).
North American Review, 93 : 418 (C. C. Smith).
Littell's Living Age, 67 : 387 ; 129 : 515 ; 129 : 482 (Morley) ; 129 : 805 (Stephen) ; 130 : 515 (Gladstone) ; 149 : 195 (Myers).

Charlotte Brontë.

Gaskell's (Mrs.) "Life of Charlotte Brontë."
Birrell's "Charlotte Brontë."
Harrison's "Early Victorian Literature."
North American Review, 67 : 354 (Whipple) ; 85 : 293 (Mrs. Sweat).
Littell's Living Age, 53 : 385, 777 ; 54 : 680 ; 55 : 385 ; 130 : 801 (Reid) ; 136 : 23 (Stephen) ; 153 : 368 (Armitt) ; 184 : 429 (Walford) ; 190 : 241, 819 (Williams).

Thackeray.

Trollope's "Life of Thackeray" (English Men of Letters).
Merivale and Marzial's "Life of Thackeray" (Great Writers Series).
Fields's "Yesterdays with Authors."
Lanier's "The English Novel."
Masson's "British Novelists."
McCarthy's "History of Our Own Times."

Harrison's "Early Victorian Literature."
Atlantic Monthly, 13 : 371 (B. Taylor) ; 60 : 853.
Forum, 14 : 503 (Mallock).
Harper's Monthly, 49 : 533 (Stoddard) ; 54 : 256 (Lunt).
North American Review, 77 : 199 (Kirk).
Littell's Living Age, 80 : 476 (Dickens) ; 144 : 157 (Reed) ; 178 : 159 (Merivale) ; 190 : 44 (Lang) ; 198 : 504 (Thackeray).

Dickens.

Forster's "Life of Charles Dickens."
Ward's "Life of Dickens" (English Men of Letters).
Marzial's "Life of Dickens" (Great Writers Series).
Davey's "Darwin, Carlyle, and Dickens."
Fields's "Yesterdays with Authors."
Harrison's "Early Victorian Literature."
Lanier's "The English Novel."
McCarthy's "History of Our Own Times."
Atlantic Monthly, 26 : 476, 591 (Putnam) ; 39 : 462 (Whipple).
Harper's Monthly, 41 : 610 (Conway).
Munsey, 10 : 647 (Hurd).
North American Review, 56 : 212 (Felton) ; 69 : 383 (Whipple).
Littell's Living Age, 110 : 29 ; 144 : 3 (Minto) ; 155 : 793 (Morris) ; 178 : 159 (Merivale).

George Eliot.

Cross's "George Eliot's Life."
Browning's (Oscar) "Life of George Eliot" (Great Writers Series).
Blind's "George Eliot" (Famous Women Series).
Brown's "Ethics of George Eliot."
Woolson's (Mrs.) "George Eliot and Her Heroines."
Dowden's "Studies in Literature."
Lanier's "The English Novel."
Harrison's "Early Victorian Literature."
Atlantic Monthly, 38 : 684 (James) ; 55 : 668 (James).
Harper's Monthly, 62 : 912 (Paul).
North American Review, 103 : 557 (Sedgwick) ; 124 : 31 (Whipple).
Scribner's Magazine, 8 : 685 (Wilkinson).
Littell's Living Age, 115 : 100 (Dowden) ; 148 : 731 (Stephen) ; 148 : 651 ; 149 : 791 (Simcox) ; 160 : 762 ; 164 : 533.

E. B. Browning.

Ingram's "Elizabeth Barrett Browning."
Orr's (Mrs.) "Life of Browning."
Sharp's "Life of Browning" (Great Writers Series).
Bayne's "Two Great Englishwomen."
Stedman's "Victorian Poets."
Lowell's "My Study Windows."
Corson's "Introduction to Browning."
Atlantic Monthly, 8 : 368 (K. Field).
North American Review, 85 : 415 (Everett).
Scribner's Magazine, 7 : 101 (Stedman).
Littell's Living Age, 52 : 427 ; 155 : 416; 181 : 643 ; 204 : 311 (Corkran).

Browning.

Orr's (Mrs.) "Life and Letters of Browning."
Sharp's "Life of Browning" (Great Writers Series).
Ritchie's (Mrs.) "Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning."
Dowden's "Studies in Literature."
Stedman's "Victorian Poets."
Alexander's "Introduction to Browning."
Cooke's "Browning Guide-Book."
Corson's "Introduction to Browning."
Forster's "Four Great Teachers: Ruskin, Carlyle, Emerson, and Browning."
Berdoe's "Browning's Message to His Time."
Atlantic Monthly, 65 : 243 ; 68 : 263.
Scribner's Magazine, 9 : 127 (Stedman).
Littell's Living Age, 122 : 67 (Orr) ; 159 : 771 (Noel) ; 184 : 290 (Brooke) ; 184 : 297 (Traill) ; 184 : 372 (Gosse) ; 184 : 660 (Hutton) ; 190 : 563 (Lang).

Tennyson.

Tennyson's "Lord Tennyson : a Memoir."
Waugh's "Alfred, Lord Tennyson."
Jenning's "Lord Tennyson."
Brooke's "Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life."
Van Dyke's "Poetry of Tennyson."
Walter's "Tennyson, Poet, Philosopher, Idealist."

Ritchie's (Mrs.) "Records of Tennyson, Ruskin, and Browning."
Dowden's "Studies in Literature."
Bagehot's "Literary Studies."
Stedman's "Victorian Poets."
Whipple's "Essays and Reviews."
Atlantic Monthly, 44: 356.
Century Magazine, 16: 515 (Van Dyke); 20: 502 (Van Dyke).
Harper's Monthly, 68: 21 (Ritchie); 86: 309 (Fields).
North American Review, 90: 1 (Everett); 133: 82 (Stoddard).
Review of Reviews, 6: 557 (Stead).
Scribner's Magazine, 8: 100, 160 (Stedman).
Littell's Living Age, 63: 579; 146: 483, 544; 147: 786; 195: 446; 196: 415 (Traill).

Carlyle.

Froude's "Life of Carlyle."
Nichol's "Life of Carlyle" (English Men of Letters).
Garnett's "Life of Carlyle" (Great Writers Series).
Masson's "Carlyle, Personally and in His Writings."
Forster's "Four Great Teachers: Ruskin, Carlyle, Emerson, and Browning."
Carlyle's "Reminiscences."
Mead's "The Philosophy of Carlyle."
Davey's "Darwin, Carlyle, and Dickens."
Dowden's "Studies in Literature."
Harrison's "Early Victorian Literature."
Norton's "Correspondence of Emerson and Carlyle."
Atlantic Monthly, 51: 320, 560; 55: 421; 71: 287.
Century Magazine, 4: 530 (Burroughs).
Harper's Monthly, 48: 726 (Wilson); 62: 888 (Conway).
North American Review, 102: 419 (Lowell); 136: 431 (Whipple); 140: 9 (F. Harrison).
Littell's Living Age, 156: 438 (Morrison); 170: 259 (Max Müller); 184: 323 (Tyndall); 191: 758 (Lecky).

Matthew Arnold.

Russell's "Letters of Matthew Arnold."
Hutton's "Essays, Theological and Literary."
Shairp's "Religion and Culture."
Atlantic Monthly, 53: 641.

Century Magazine, 1 : 849 (Lang).
Forum, 20 : 616.
Scribner's Magazine, 4 : 537 (Birrell); 7 : 463 (Stedman); 18 : 281 (Merriam).
Littell's Living Age, 177 : 545 (Myers); 178 : 88 (Traill); 182 : 771 (Lord Coleridge); 200 : 90 (Stephen); 207 : 771 (Gladstone); 208 : 46 (A. Austin); 209 : 362 (F. Harrison).

Ruskin.

Collingwood's "Life of John Ruskin."
Mather's "Life and Teachings of John Ruskin."
Ruskin's "Præterita."
Japp's "Three Great Teachers of Our Time."
Bayne's "Lessons from My Masters."
Baillie's "Aspects of the Thought and Teaching of John Ruskin."
Century Magazine, 13 : 357 (Stillman).
Harper's Monthly, 80 : 578 (Ritchie).
Littell's Living Age, 178 : 50; 187 : 407; 198 : 813; 199 : 131.

BOOKS WORTH READING

THE following list of books is intended to include a large number of standard works from the various periods of English literature. All the works placed in the list, except a few minor poems, are mentioned in the text, where more or less information concerning them is given. It is hoped that the list will serve as a guide to those who are often at a loss to know what to read or study, and who, for lack of judicious guidance, waste much time on what is poor or hurtful literature. *The works specially commended to the student are printed in small capitals.* Many excellent works in literary biography and criticism have been given in the foregoing list of "Books of Reference."

"BEOWULF" (Earle's, Garnett's, or Hall's translation).
Bede's "Ecclesiastical History," with Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Bohn).
Langland's "Piers the Plowman."
Gower's "Confessio Amantis."
Chaucer's "Compleynt unto Pite," "Truth," "Compleynt to his Purs," "PROLOGUE," "KNIGHT'S TALE," "Clerk's Tale," "Nonne Prestes Tale," "Wife of Bath's Tale."
More's "Utopia."
Hooker's "Ecclesiastical Polity," Book I.
Sidney's "Defense of Poesie."
"OLD ENGLISH BALLADS" (Percy's Reliques).
"Best Elizabethan Plays" (Thayer).
Spenser's "Shepherd's Calendar," "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," "Mother Hubbard's Tale," "Epithalamion," "FAERY QUEENE," Book I.
Bacon's "ESSAYS," "Advancement of Learning," "Novum Organum."
Shakespeare's "King Henry IV.," "Merry Wives of Windsor," "MERCHANT OF VENICE," "Midsummer Night's Dream," "Taming of the Shrew," "JULIUS CAESAR," "Antony and Cleopatra," "ROMEO AND JULIET," "HAMLET," "OTHELLO," "MACBETH," "KING LEAR," etc.

Walton's "Complete Angler."
Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying."
Baxter's "Saints' Everlasting Rest" and "Reformed Pastor."
Clarendon's "History of the Rebellion."
Milton's "Comus," "L'ALLEGRO," "IL PENSEROSO," "Lycidas," "AREOPAGITICA," "TRACTATE ON EDUCATION," "SAMSON AGONISTES," "PARADISE LOST," "Paradise Regained."
Bunyan's "PILGRIM'S PROGRESS."
Evelyn's "Diary."
Pepys's "Diary."
Locke's "Thoughts Concerning Education" and "Essay on the Human Understanding."
Dryden's "ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL," "RELIGIO LAICI," "Hind and Panther," "AENEID," "PALAMON AND ARCITE," "ALEXANDER'S FEAST."
Addison's "Cato," "Hymns," and "SPECTATOR."
Pope's "ESSAY ON CRITICISM," "Rape of the Lock," "ILIAD," "ESSAY ON MAN," etc.
Swift's "Battle of the Books," "Tale of a Tub," "GULLIVER'S TRAVELS," "Journal to Stella."
Sheridan's "The Rivals" and "SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL."
Burke's "SPEECHES" and "Reflections on the Revolution in France."
Hume's "History of England."
Robertson's "History of Scotland" and "History of Charles V."
Gibbon's "DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE" and "AUTOBIOGRAPHY."
Akenside's "Pleasures of the Imagination."
Gray's "Poems," particularly "DISTANT PROSPECT OF ETON COLLEGE," "ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCH YARD," and "PROGRESS OF POESY."
Collins's "Ode on the Death of Thomson," "Ode to Evening," and "ODE ON THE PASSIONS."
Crabbe's "The Village."
Shenstone's "The School-Mistress."
Warton's "History of English Poetry."
Percy's "Reliques of Ancient English Poetry."
Boswell's "LIFE OF JOHNSON."
Smith's "Wealth of Nations."
Macpherson's "Ossian."
Beattie's "Minstrel."

Johnson's "Vanity of Human Wishes," "RAMBLER," "RASSELAS," and "LIVES OF THE POETS."

Goldsmith's "TRAVELLER," "DESERTED VILLAGE," "The Good-Natured Man," "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER," and "VICAR OF WAKEFIELD."

Cowper's "THE TASK," "Iliad," "JOHN GILPIN," "FRIENDSHIP," "Verses," "MY MOTHER'S PICTURE," "The Poplar Field," "The Shrubbery," "The Castaway," and "Letters."

Burns's "COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT," "MARY MORISON," "TO A MOUSE," "Address to the Deil," "MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN," "MOUNTAIN DAISY," "A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT," "ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE," "TALE O' TAM O'SHANTER," "TO MARY IN HEAVEN," "Bruce's Address," "EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND," "Address to the Unco Guid," etc.

Lamb's "Tales from Shakespeare" and "ESSAYS OF ELIA."

Lockhart's "Life of Burns" and "LIFE OF SCOTT."

Hallam's "Middle Ages" and "Literature of Europe."

Mitford's "History of Greece."

Jane Austen's "SENSE AND SENSIBILITY," "PRIDE AND PREJUDICE," and "Emma."

Jane Porter's "THADDEUS OF WARSAW" and "The Scottish Chiefs."

Mrs. Hemans's "Poems."

Maria Edgeworth's "Castle Rackrent."

Campbell's "PLEASURES OF HOPE," "Gertrude of Wyoming," "O'Connor's Child," "LOCHIEL'S WARNING," "Battle of the Baltic," "Ye Mariners of England," "HOHENLINDEN," "SOLDIER'S DREAM," "LAST MAN," "HALLOWED GROUND," etc.

Keats's "Endymion," "LAMIA," "EVE OF ST. AGNES," "Hyperion," "NIGHTINGALE," "GRECIAN URN," and "Autumn."

Southey's "LIFE OF NELSON," and select poems, particularly "LODORE," "WELL OF ST. KEYNE," "MARY THE MAID OF THE INN," "MARCH TO MOSCOW," "THE SCHOLAR," "AULD CLOOTS," etc.

Moore's "LALLA ROOKH," "IRISH MELODIES," and "Life of Byron."

Hood's "Poems" and "UP THE RHINE."

Keble's "Christian Year."

Rogers's "Pleasures of Memory."

Scott's "LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL," "MARMION," "LADY OF THE LAKE," "Waverley," "OLD MORTALITY," "HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN," "Kenilworth," "IVANHOE," "Quentin Durward," etc.

Byron's "ENGLISH BARDS AND SCOTCH REVIEWERS," "CHILDE HAROLD," "PRISONER OF CHILLON," "GIAOUR," "Bride of Abydos," "Corsair," "Lara," "Manfred," "THE DREAM," "FARE THEE WELL," "Vision of Judgment," "Hebrew Melodies," etc.

Wordsworth's "We are Seven," "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," "TINTERN ABBEY," "Lucy Gray," "Ruth," "Nutting," "Poet's Epitaph," "MICHAEL," "THE HAPPY WARRIOR," "My Heart Leaps Up," "She Was a Phantom of Delight," "To the Daisy," "She Dwelt Among the Untrodden Ways," "ODE TO DUTY," "ODE ON IMMORTALITY," "The Prelude," "The Excursion" (extracts), "Sonnets."

Coleridge's "BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA," "Table Talk," "Æolian Harp," "Reflections on Leaving a Place of Retirement," "Religious Musings," "The Destiny of Nations," "Ode to France," "TO WILLIAM WORDSWORTH," "The Nightingale," "THE ANCIENT MARINER," "LOVE," "CHRISTABEL," "Ode to Dejection," "Hymn before Sunrise," "Wallenstein."

Shelley's "THE LAMENT," "HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY," "Alastor," "The Revolt of Islam," "Julian and Maddalo," "Ode to the West Wind," "Prometheus Unbound," "THE CENCI," "Ode to Naples," "Ode to Liberty," "TO A SKYLARK," "THE CLOUD," "ADONAIS," "Defence of Poetry."

De Quincey's "LITERARY REMINISCENCES," "CONFESSIONS OF AN OPIUM EATER," "ON MURDER CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE FINE ARTS," "Suspiria de Profundis," "The English Mail Coach," "Revolt of the Tartars," "On War," "Style," "JOAN OF ARC," "Autobiographical Sketches."

Bulwer's "LAST DAYS OF POMPEII," "My Novel," "THE LADY OF LYONS," "RICHELIEU," etc.

Disraeli's "VIVIAN GREY," "Coningsby," "Endymion," etc.

Kingsley's "HYPATIA," "WESTWARD HO," "Hereward the Wake," etc.

Marryat's "Peter Simple," "MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY," etc.

Trollope's "The Warden," "FRAMLEY PARSONAGE," "Can You Forgive Her," "AUTOBIOGRAPHY," etc.

Reade's "Peg Woffington," "IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND," "The Cloister and the Hearth," etc.

Collins's "The Woman in White," "No Name," "THE MOONSTONE."

Stevenson's "TREASURE ISLAND," "Kidnapped," "The Master of Ballantrae," etc.

Mrs. Craik's "JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN," "A Life for a Life," etc.
Lord Lytton's (Owen Meredith) "LUCILE."
Morris's "Life and Death of Jason" and "Earthly Paradise."
Rossetti's "Rose Mary," "Blessed Damozel," "Ballad of the White Ship," "The King's Tragedy," etc.
Swinburne's "Atalanta in Calydon," and shorter poems.
Arnold's (Edwin) "The Light of Asia," "The Light of the World," etc.
Grote's "History of Greece."
Thirlwall's "History of Greece."
Milman's "Latin Christianity."
Froude's "History of England," "SHORT STUDIES ON GREAT SUBJECTS," "LIFE OF CARLYLE," "Life of Erasmus."
Freeman's "History of the Norman Conquest."
Lecky's "History of European Morals."
Green's "HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE."
Alison's "History of Europe."
Darwin's "Origin of Species" and "Descent of Man."
Spencer's "First Principles," "Data of Ethics," "The Study of Sociology."
Huxley's "Lay Sermons" and "Science, Culture, and Other Essays."
Mill's "Political Economy," "Representative Government," "Subjection of Women."
Miller's "My Schools and School-masters," "Old Red Sandstone."
Macaulay's "LAYS OF ANCIENT ROME," "History of England," and "ESSAYS."
Bronté's "The Professor," "JANE EYRE," "Shirley," "Villette."
Thackeray's "Memoirs of Yellowplush," "Catharine," "Great Hoggarty Diamond," "Barry Lyndon," "The Lucky Speculator," "Novels by Eminent Hands," "The Book of Snobs," "VANITY FAIR," "PENDENNIS," "HENRY ESMOND," "THE NEWCOMES," "ENGLISH HUMORISTS."
Dickens's "PICKWICK," "OLIVER TWIST," "NICHOLAS NICKLEBY," "Old Curiosity Shop," "Martin Chuzzlewit," "THE CHRISTMAS CAROL," "Dombey and Son," "DAVID COPPERFIELD," "Bleak House," "Tale of Two Cities," etc.
George Eliot's "Scenes of Clerical Life," "ADAM BEDE," "THE MILL ON THE FLOSS," "SILAS MARNER," "ROMOLA," "Middlemarch," "Daniel Deronda."
Mrs. Browning's "Romaunt of Margret," "The Poet's Vow," "Cowper's Grave," "Crowned and Buried," "My Heart and I," "A Vision of

Poets," "WINE OF CYPRUS," "Prometheus Bound," "RHYME OF THE DUCHESS MAY," "THE DEAD PAN," "The Sleep," "LADY GERALDINE'S COURTSHIP," "SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE," "Casa Guidi Windows," "AURORA LEIGH," "Napoleon III. in Italy," "Italy and the World," etc.

Browning's "Paracelsus," "PIPPA PASSES," "MY LAST DUCHESS," "Laria," "A DEATH IN THE DESERT," "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," "How they Brought the Good News from Aix to Ghent," "Saul," "Christmas Eve and Easter Day," "Evelyn Hope," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "By the Fireside," "STRANGE MEDICAL EXPERIENCES OF KARSHISH," "THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER," "ANDREA DEL SARTO," "In a Balcony," "CLEON," "Abt Vogler," "Rabbi Ben Ezra," "Balaustion's Adventure," etc.

Tennyson's "Lilian," "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," "Mariana," "THE POET," "MAY QUEEN," "Lady Clara Vere de Vere," "The Lotus Eaters," "The Palace of Art," "MORTE D'ARTHUR," "THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER," "DORA," "LOCKSLEY HALL," "Edward Gray," "Lady Clare," "Ulysses," "The Two Voices," "St. Simeon Stylites," "THE PRINCESS," "IN MEMORIAM," "Maud," "IDYLS OF THE KING," "ENOCH ARDEN," "Merlin and the Gleam," etc.

Carlyle's "Life of Schiller," "Life of Sterling," "Richter," "Goethe," "BURNS," "Voltaire," "Signs of the Times," "Characteristics," "BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON," "SIR WALTER SCOTT," "SARTOR RESARTUS," "French Revolution," "HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP," "PAST AND PRESENT," "Cromwell's Letters and Speeches," "Frederick the Great," "INAUGURAL ADDRESS," "REMINISCENCES."

Arnold's (Matthew) "SOHRAB AND RUSTUM," "BALDER DEAD," "Resignation," "A QUESTION," "The Future," "The Grande Chartreuse," "Stagirius," "Human Life," "IN UTRUMQUE PARATUS," "Dover Beach," "Lines Written in Kensington Gardens," "The Scholar Gypsy," "Memorial Verses," "On Translating Homer," "Essays in Criticism," "CULTURE AND ANARCHY," "Essays in Criticism" (second series), "DISCOURSES IN AMERICA."

Ruskin's "Modern Painters," "SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE," "The Stones of Venice," "Unto this Last," "Munera Pulveris," "SESAME AND LILIES," "CROWN OF WILD OLIVES," "Time and Tide," "Lectures on Art," "PRAETERITA."

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